

OVERVIEW

THE CORPORATION FOR NATIONAL AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

Our Nation has a long and honorable commitment to assisting individuals, families, and communities who either have not fully shared in America's prosperity or have short-term needs created by changes in life circumstances. This commitment is rooted in the hearts of individuals and by those with a stake in community. Clearly, government can support such efforts, but across the country national and local nonprofit organizations, including faith-based groups, are on the front lines, working to improve lives in some of the hardest pressed communities in America.

The set of institutions in America that is private, nonprofit, and self-governing has come to be viewed both as a critical component of community life and as a convenient and fulfilling way to meet community needs.

The Corporation for National and Community Service will help assure that the government contributes to and supports the volunteer and service efforts of individuals, organizations, and communities. Specifically, our mission is to support people and organizations in using citizen service as a strategy to meet critical national and community needs, to foster an ethic of civic responsibility, and to strengthen the ties that bind us together as a nation.

We believe that service has a positive impact on those who serve. It builds civic responsibility and enables participants to practice responsible citizenship. It helps youth make the transition into adulthood. It enables seniors to leave a legacy. Through service, members of a community see themselves as problem-solvers, not problems; become leaders, not just followers; and become citizens, not spectators, in their communities. Further, through service individuals develop additional skills and gain valuable experience that will serve them well in the future.

We continue to make children and youth a priority that cuts across our programs and activities.

For 2002-03, the Corporation has set several specific goals:

- Strengthening the capacity of nonprofit organizations, including community and faith-based organizations, to assist individuals, families, and communities in need.
- Increasing the amount of volunteering and civic engagement in America.
- Building upon the successful practices of the organizations and individuals we help support.
- Expanding partnerships with public and private organizations at all levels—national, state, and local.
- Leveraging resources, and investing strategically, to make the contributions of the Corporation more effective.

THE AMERICORPS NETWORK

AmeriCorps is a national service network that provides full- and part-time opportunities for participants, called members, to serve their communities and address local environmental, educational, public safety, or other human needs. Within these four issue areas, programs may submit proposals that address specific problems of local communities. In other words, local needs drive AmeriCorps.

The AmeriCorps national service network includes AmeriCorps* State and National programs, Indian Tribe and U.S. Territory programs, Education Awards Program, AmeriCorps Promise Fellows, AmeriCorps*VISTA, and AmeriCorps*NCCC. Through service with community organizations and agencies, in communities large and small throughout America, AmeriCorps members fulfill their pledge to “get things done.”

In the short time since AmeriCorps’ inception, its members have achieved impressive results. This year, more than 50,000 AmeriCorps members will serve communities throughout the country.

You should use these guidelines if you are applying for an AmeriCorps*State program grant.

WHAT’S NEW FOR 2002?

Cost Per Member

The fiscal year 2002 Corporation average budget cost per member, across all programs within a state, is \$12,400, a cost of living increase of \$300 above prior year levels. Your state determines how it will meet this requirement. The budget form provides instructions for calculating the Corporation cost per member, otherwise known as cost per full-time equivalent (FTE).

Living Allowance

The minimum fiscal year 2002 living allowance for a full-time member is \$9,600. The maximum is \$19,200 for full-time and set for anything less than full-time according to the chart on page 17. However, the amount of the living allowance that you may pay members with the Corporation’s and other federal funds may not exceed 85% of the minimum living allowance, or \$8,160.

Reduced Part-Time Terms of Service, Education Awards, and FTE

The Corporation has changed the Terms of Service, FTE calculation, and related Education Award amounts to simplify them. Instead of calculating the reduced part-time (now called half-time) education award or FTE calculation based on hours served for each position, the amounts are fixed for three categories within “Reduced Part-Time.” Making this change standardizes the Education Award and FTE calculation so that there are no longer potentially hundreds of categories below the half-time level.

The following chart outlines the changes for all terms of service:

	# of hours ¹	Ed Award	FTE ²
Full-Time	1700	\$4,725.00	1.000
One Year Half-Time	900	\$2,362.50	0.500
Two Year Half-Time	900	\$2,362.50	0.250
Reduced Half-Time	675	\$1,800.00	0.375
Quarter-Time	450	\$1,250.00	0.250
Minimum-Time	300	\$1,000.00	0.200

AmeriCorps Leaders

The Corporation no longer offers separate national training for AmeriCorps Leaders. Many states have assumed this responsibility. We have always encouraged AmeriCorps programs to build member leadership capacity and a number of programs select team leaders. We expect this practice will continue.

Citizenship

All programs must provide training and the use of service experience to help members acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to be active citizens of communities. Programs have the flexibility to determine the materials you will use to conduct citizenship training. This year the Corporation, in partnership with a number of programs across the country, is testing the impact of two curricula. See page 6 for more details.

Mobilization of Volunteers

A fundamental purpose of AmeriCorps is to help mobilize, support, and manage the vast networks of volunteers assisting nonprofit organizations in meeting community needs. We will give a preference to programs that involve AmeriCorps members in mobilizing volunteers to help meet community needs. We recognize that some program designs are not suited to mobilization and management of volunteers. Such programs may still apply for AmeriCorps funds.

Support for Community Organizations (Secular and Faith-Based)

For the 2002-03 program year, programs requesting new funding from the Corporation should demonstrate a connection with secular, and/or faith-based community organizations. We will give greater weight to applications that do so. You will find more information about this on page 11.

We encourage programs requesting continuation funds to expand your relationships with, and support for, the efforts of civic, community, educational, and faith-based organizations to solve local problems and meet the critical needs of individuals and communities.

¹ Represents the minimum number of hours a member serves.

² Used to calculate cost/Full-Time Education Award (FTE) and is fixed regardless of the number of hours served.

Student Service

All institutions of higher education must now describe their efforts to support community service under Federal Work Study. See page 14 for specific details.

Non-Federal Support for Programs

While AmeriCorps still requires a minimum 15% cash grantee share for Member Support Costs and a minimum 33% Program Operating Cost grantee share, the Corporation encourages programs to secure greater support from state and local funding sources, including private sources. The selection criteria for grant applications include 15% for Budget/Cost Effectiveness. Commitment of applicant organization or host agency to securing resources, i.e., non-federal support, for program implementation or sustainability is now our major focus under this criteria. See page 23 for more information.

Planning Grants

For the 2002-2003 program year, we will allow programs to propose planning grants under the AmeriCorps*State Competitive category. The planning grants may be for no more than \$50,000. See page 24 for further information and page 44 for application instructions. State commissions may choose to make planning grants also available in the AmeriCorps*State formula category.

Electronic Updates

The Corporation is working with other federal agencies to simplify federal grant-making processes (as required under Public Law 106-107) and provide access to federal activities over the Internet (in response to the President's Management and Performance Plan). The AmeriCorps Recruitment System provides one-stop, online shopping for individuals wanting to join AmeriCorps. In addition, the Corporation is developing a new grants management system that will include on-line grant applications, awards, and reporting. AmeriCorps*State programs will continue to use the WBRs system for member-related procedures and for financial and program reporting. The WBRs system will interface with the new grants database. However, other activities, including applying for grants, audit resolution, and the award process will be done through the new system. We expect the system to be in place by June 2002. AmeriCorps programs will receive their 2002 grant award through the system. The first time AmeriCorps programs will use it for on-line applications will be with the 2003 grants. When the new system is in place, all Corporation programs will use the Standard Federal SF-424 as the grant application.

To assist with the transition, we will use the Standard Form SF-424 in paper form in 2002. The SF-424 face sheet will replace the Title Page. We have revised the program narrative questions to reflect the new format.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT DESIGNING AN AMERICORPS PROGRAM

AmeriCorps funds and supports high-quality programs that get things done, encourage responsibility, expand opportunities, and strengthen communities. AmeriCorps members undertake service that has a maximum impact on our nation's communities and that would not be provided without the service of AmeriCorps members and the volunteers they generate.

Getting Things Done

Your program must provide opportunities for your community to define and solve its problems. You must be able to demonstrate that your program or the service you offer provides a direct benefit that the community values, and that existing funds or volunteers do not already provide this service. In addition, your program service activities must demonstrate positive impact on the communities served. Program activities cannot duplicate the routine functions of workers, nor may programs displace paid employees.

Direct Benefit

AmeriCorps provides a variety of specific and identifiable services to communities. For example, your program may renovate low-income housing or create a playground in a vacant lot. You may engage in human service projects such as tutoring, mentoring, or conflict resolution. You may recruit, coordinate, and manage volunteers whose service benefits the community directly. We do not generally consider clerical tasks or research direct benefits. However, you may need assistance to develop your project. For example, your project may use a team to provide meals, transportation, and health services to the homebound, and you need to conduct a door-to-door survey of community residents to help identify those in need of this service. Because the survey in this instance serves as a springboard for providing a service, it satisfies our direct benefit requirement.

Issue Areas and National Priorities for 2002 Programs

Each year, the Corporation considers priorities within the four issue areas: education, environment, public safety, and other human needs. Our national priority for fiscal year 2002 within the four issue areas continues to be children and youth. In meeting this priority, your program may focus its efforts on serving children and youth, plan to recruit or coordinate youth volunteers to assist in program activities, or both. AmeriCorps*State competitive, AmeriCorps*National, and Education Awards Programs must follow national priorities. AmeriCorps*State formula programs and Indian Tribe/U.S. Territory programs may respond to specific state, tribal, or territory priorities.

We recognize that some high-quality programs meet different priorities and it may dilute your effectiveness to redesign your efforts to focus on children and youth. Examples include programs that work with homebound elders, do groundwater contamination testing, build houses for low-income people, or help unemployed

people find employment. If your program has such a mission, provides high-quality services, and can demonstrate compelling needs, we encourage you to apply. To the extent that the AmeriCorps members you recruit for your program are themselves young, their service itself is a benefit to youth.

Developing AmeriCorps Members

We expand opportunities, helping those who help America. Because of their AmeriCorps service, members develop additional skills, gain valuable experience, and receive education awards that they can use to repay school loans or for future education. Although programs will have different effects on members, depending on program design, all programs should seek to recruit and develop members by including the following components:

Citizenship

The National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended, has as one of its basic purposes to “renew the ethic of civic responsibility and the spirit of community throughout the United States.”

You should provide training and use the service experience to help members acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to be active citizens of communities--local, state, national, and international. In the main, that means understanding how communities work and playing active roles in their workings.

We want members to understand the relationships between the kinds of service activities they are doing and other ways of helping communities. These ways may include promoting programs that take advantage of business methods to enhance civic purposes. We want members to acquire some knowledge and experience in the skills necessary to participate in a range of such activities. Where feasible and appropriate, projects should allow members to practice some of these skills during their term of service.

Programs have the flexibility to determine the materials you will use to conduct citizenship training. This year the Corporation, in partnership with a number of programs across the country, is testing the impact of two curricula. We will share the results of this test with you next year.

We will send these curricula, and accompanying teaching guides, to all programs by the end of September. We encourage the use of one of the two sets of curricula, or a comparable training program. The two sets of curricula are:

- ***By the People*** was developed by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. ***By the People*** was designed to introduce AmeriCorps members and staff to a set of civic concepts that give a broader context to service and also a set of civic skills to help members serve more effectively.

- *A Guide to Effective Citizenship through National Service* was developed by the Constitutional Rights Foundation. By linking citizenship to the mission of AmeriCorps, the **Guide** helps members develop the connections between their sense of themselves and their value to the community. The **Guide** provides tools for integrating active citizenship into the AmeriCorps experience through interactive sessions.

These curricula provide a series of materials and practices that focus on the knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for active citizenship. Members are also given the opportunity to take action through service projects in the community. These curricula build upon the best practices of service programs across the country. Some examples follow.

Knowledge

To function effectively as a citizen, programs are providing AmeriCorps members with basic knowledge about citizen rights, community issues, and their community's institutions.

Many AmeriCorps programs require members to read newspapers. They supply a great deal of information about community issues. Some programs engage members in critiques of whether local newspapers cover important problems in the community and whether the coverage is fair and accurate.

Some AmeriCorps programs have their members identify and discuss the basic constitutional rights of Americans. Members debate the relative importance of these rights. Then members use this knowledge to help students and others with whom they work understand their basic rights as citizens.

Members working in the field of education are taught through interactive methods how public education is financed in a community and the political processes for making those decisions.

Skills

The AmeriCorps experience is designed to enhance a member's skills. In the area of citizenship, members are provided the ability to use information effectively, to make a plan and act on it, and to move others to support such efforts.

Many good AmeriCorps programs give members the opportunity to debate with their fellow members about issues of importance to the community. Skills are needed to gather information, organize it, and present one's position before a group. These skills are critical to later participation in civic life.

Many AmeriCorps programs have effective training that develop members' skills to mobilize and manage community volunteers. Members get to put these skills into immediate practice within their service project. These skills are a prerequisite to the effective engagement of these volunteers in the civic life of their community.

Some programs provide members with skills for understanding and analyzing issues of importance to democracy. For example, members develop an understanding of polling and the importance of asking questions such as the sponsor of the poll, the questions asked, whether it was scientific, and its timing.

Values

An effective citizen upholds democratic values. A well-run program supports such values.

AmeriCorps programs often recognize that conflicts and disagreements among members are inevitable. Some programs make connections between these disagreements and the democratic process, and provide members with tools for understanding why different perspectives exist.

Most AmeriCorps members face directly how differences in age, race, gender, and other demographic factors influence peoples' opinions. Good programs often use this reality to reinforce the importance of discussing issues with people with different perspectives to democracy.

Ethic of Service

Service builds civic responsibility and enables participants to practice responsible citizenship. It helps youth make the transition into adulthood. Through service, AmeriCorps enables members to see themselves as problem-solvers, not problems; to become leaders, not just followers; and to take personal responsibility.

At the start of their service, all AmeriCorps members take the AmeriCorps pledge:

I will get things done for America – to make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy, I will take action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity, I will take action.

I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.

To create an *esprit de corps* for members, we encourage you to begin members' terms of service in June, September, and/or January. When you design "classes" of members that begin and graduate from their terms of service at the same time, you help to create a national AmeriCorps identity. This will also facilitate recruitment

in concert with the academic year. If you lose AmeriCorps members between "classes," we encourage you to fill those slots with members who have had appropriate orientation and training prior to beginning their term of service.

We ask that you identify your program as part of the national service network and as a program in which AmeriCorps members serve. You can do this by using AmeriCorps logos, common application materials, and other means. You are not required to call your program AmeriCorps, though you may use the AmeriCorps name along with your own program's name.

To help develop an ethic of lifetime service, programs should encourage members to consider the meaning of the following line from the AmeriCorps pledge: "I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond."

Leadership Opportunities

We encourage programs to build member leadership capacity by providing opportunities for members to coordinate activities, recruit volunteers, and serve in team leader capacities in their programs. You may address leadership opportunities in either the program design section or in your member development objectives in your application. Please note, however, that members may not be assigned as the legal supervisors of fellow members.

Supervision, Training, and Education

Your program must provide members with the supervision, training, skills, and knowledge they need to perform their tasks. You must give members the background information they need on a community and help them understand the community's need for a specific service or project. You may also provide specific training in a particular field to your members if appropriate. This includes training and education that allows members to explore career possibilities in areas such as child development, teaching, public health, or public safety. We encourage you to train members in cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), conflict resolution, and communication skills. A qualified supervisor must provide members with regular and adequate oversight.

Support Services

You must support members who are school dropouts in earning the equivalent of a high school diploma. We encourage you to provide all members who are completing a term of service with information about education and career opportunities.

Recruitment Tools and Resources

AmeriCorps has a new recruitment system on the AmeriCorps website (www.americorps.org). This system allows AmeriCorps programs to post information about their programs and their member assignments. Programs may list multiple assignments as well as multiple geographic sites. Using their own criteria, programs may search for prospective members for their own recruitment

outreach efforts. Programs can e-mail both prospects and applicants, to alert them of program information and updates, interview schedules, and other service opportunities. For more information, visit the website. As part of the web-based recruitment system, prospective members may apply directly to participating AmeriCorps programs electronically, as well as search for programs based on their interests, eligibility, and geographic preference. For prospects without web access or for prospective members who want information and application materials, we have an AmeriCorps hotline available at 1-800-942-2677.

Diversity

Your program builds strong communities when it engages diverse members and staff in common service. You should actively seek to include members and staff from the communities where your project operates, as well as men and women of various races, ethnicities, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. In assessing whether your program meets this criterion, we will take into account that your program objectives might require you to recruit members and staff who share a specific characteristic or background. Please note, however, that your program cannot violate the non-discrimination, non-duplication, and non-displacement rules that govern member and staff selection.

If your program lacks diversity in one or more areas, it must strive in other ways to be diverse. You should intentionally create activities or provide opportunities for citizens to come together who might not otherwise serve or come into contact with each other. As you strive to achieve diversity, we encourage you to bring together younger and older members.

Strengthening Communities

AmeriCorps strengthens communities through community involvement and consultation. AmeriCorps members help bring diverse individuals and groups together in teams to cooperate in achieving constructive change and to solve critical community problems.

Community Involvement and Consultation

We see local involvement and input as vital to the development of high-quality service programs that sustain and build communities. You should use extensive, broad-based local input to design, implement, and evaluate your project. This includes consultation with:

- representatives from the community you serve;
- members (or potential members) in your program;
- appropriate community-based agencies; foundations; businesses; local labor organizations representing employees of service sponsors; and local government.

Partnerships with community groups may help to enhance organizational capacity and strengthen communities. They afford opportunities for you to collaborate and share technical expertise and resources.

Bringing various organizations and people together to accomplish a common goal mobilizes community resources. We will give a preference to programs that involve AmeriCorps members in mobilizing volunteers to help meet community needs. Mobilizing volunteers not only enables programs to accomplish objectives, it provides people with an opportunity to serve. Leveraging volunteers and linking with existing service efforts (including other local Corporation-funded programs) can enhance program results and build community capacity.

Support for Community Organizations (Secular and Faith-Based)

Across the country, secular and faith-based community organizations are on the front lines, working to improve lives in some of the hardest pressed communities in America. The programs and activities supported through the Corporation for National and Community Service give vital help to these efforts. But we can do more.

Earlier this year the President signed two Executive Orders emphasizing the role of community organizations, including faith-based entities, in assisting those whom prosperity has left behind.

The Corporation supports this agenda through all of its programs. In 1993, the national service legislation included community-based organizations as a category for support and defined them as private nonprofit organizations that represent a community or a significant segment of a community and that are engaged in meeting human, educational, environmental, and public safety community needs. The legislation specifically included churches and other faith-based organizations in this definition, recognizing the importance of such groups in dealing directly with the most difficult problems facing individuals in our communities.

Since 1993, we have had extensive experience working with a wide array of community-based organizations. We have worked with community-based organizations such as neighborhood associations, local social service agencies, food banks, credit unions, planning councils, after-school programs, and shelters. We have also worked directly with faith-based organizations in these same categories and have supported directly groups such as Habitat for Humanity, Lutheran Services in America, the Catholic Network for Volunteer Service, and the National Jewish Coalition for Literacy. All of these organizations play a critical role in developing and preserving communities of character in which there is support for those in need, while preserving the dignity of the individual and fostering personal responsibility.

In recognition of the critical role of these organizations, the Corporation recently conducted a meeting of faith-based and small community organizations to identify steps the Corporation could take to make our resources more accessible to such organizations. We learned that small community organizations (both secular and faith-based) need (1) more information about the resources and support available from federal, state, and local agencies; and (2) training and technical assistance to

build the capacity to use these resources in meeting community needs. Based upon this meeting and input from other interested parties, the Corporation is establishing an intake center to help community and small faith-based organizations discover and make the best use of available public resources. We anticipate that this center will become operational in the fall of 2001.

For the program year 2002-03, we encourage programs requesting continuation funds from the Corporation for National and Community Service to expand their relationships with, and support for, the efforts of civic, community, educational, and faith-based organizations to solve local problems and meet critical needs of individuals and communities. Examples of these efforts include:

- A Texas community partnership of volunteer teams from businesses, civic groups, and churches are helping families along the path toward self-sufficiency. The program utilizes a team approach with the skills, experiences, and resources of many people to help families receiving Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) to overcome barriers to getting and keeping a good job.
- Catholic Network of Volunteer Service (CNVS), an AmeriCorps Education Awards Program, is a membership organization of 220 faith-based volunteer programs. These programs operate in 50 states, and CNVS member programs work with local community social service agencies and non-profits to identify community needs that may be met through service in the areas of education, and human needs.

For the 2002-03 program year, programs requesting new funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service should demonstrate a connection with secular, and/or faith-based community organizations. The Corporation will give greater weight to applications that do so.

The Corporation is not prescribing any particular approach for meeting this goal of providing support to community organizations, nor is it setting aside funds for any specific category of grantee. In some instances, community organizations (secular and faith-based) may be direct applicants for grant funding. In other cases, Corporation-funded programs might partner with community-based organizations to meet their objectives. In still other cases, Corporation grantees may serve as intermediaries in providing support to community organizations.

Program Types

You have great flexibility to design a program that “gets things done” in communities, develops the citizenship and skills of members, and strengthens the ties that bind communities together. You may assign members to individual projects or organize them in teams. Similarly, you may determine whether a full-time or half-time schedule is more appropriate to your program’s goals. Our regulations provide a list of program types that illustrate the range of national service programs (see 45 C.F.R., Chapter XXV, Section

2522.110). You may find that your program fits more than one type because program characteristics overlap in some areas.

Some examples of types of programs are:

- community-based service programs that tutor and mentor younger children and include opportunities for them to participate in service projects after school, on weekends, and during school vacations;
- programs that recruit, train, and support several hundred college volunteers to serve elementary school students in schools to support a conflict resolution curriculum;
- college-based programs in which student AmeriCorps members, including Federal Work Study students, perform substantial service in local schools or other community settings;
- faith-based programs that provide literacy and English as a Second Language training for low-income adults, reading improvement for homeless elementary school-age children, or teach and model social skills to children;
- programs initiated by mayors and other local officials to integrate AmeriCorps members into community-wide strategies to meet local needs;
- immunization programs that target young children and their families;
- a full-time, year round youth corps or summer youth corps program undertaking service projects with visible public benefits, including natural resource projects;
- programs placing members as service-learning coordinators in schools and youth organizations; and
- programs using qualified members as teachers, teacher aides, and early childhood workers in communities with an inadequate number of such professionals.

To learn about a number of programs focusing on different issue areas, visit our web site at www.americorps.org.

We continue to encourage programs to focus on education or public safety or the environment or other human needs, instead of trying to address all issue areas. Experience shows that it is difficult for a program to demonstrate its community impact when it tries to meet several educational, environmental, public safety, and other human needs at once. However, we recognize that certain programs such as volunteer generator models, youth service corps, or programs that operate in rural areas, may operate more effectively by developing activities in more than one issue area. All programs should provide strategies you will use to demonstrate outcomes.

Program Size

Your program should be large enough to make a significant difference in your community. While the actual size of your program may vary depending on the size of the community in which it operates, we encourage you to enroll at least 20 full-time equivalent members, regardless of whether members are placed individually or in teams. Small, community based organizations may seek support for a program that enrolls less than 20 full-time equivalent members.

We encourage all applicants, when considering program size, to examine cost-effectiveness by calculating the Corporation cost per member.

Summer Programs

We encourage but do not require you to operate a summer program as a component of your year-round program, or to expand your operations during the summer months. Care must be taken to ensure that the summer component is consistent with the overall mission of your program and that you do not design it as separate from the year-round operation. You should also make sure that your summer program instills the ethic of service in the participants and is not just a summer job. Any members you add for a summer period must complete at least 300 hours of service.

Student Service

The Higher Education Reauthorization Act of 1998 requires that all institutions of higher education who receive Federal Work Study (FWS) funds utilize a minimum of 7% of their total FWS budget for community service placements. Each college must also include an elementary or family literacy component. Because this is one important vehicle to encourage and expand student service, the Corporation is very interested in what campuses are doing to meet and exceed this requirement. Community service activities undertaken using FWS can be a valuable resource for national service programs. While the FWS program is administered by college financial aid offices, many colleges have built strong relationships between the community service, service-learning, or volunteer office and the financial aid office to enhance community service efforts of the campus. Some service offices even manage the community service FWS program on their campus. Both service offices and community partners can assist the financial aid office in enhancing community service FWS programs. For more information on the FWS for Community Service program, you can read about it online at www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/pubs/WorkStudy/.

The Corporation has analyzed data from the 1999-2000 school year reported to the Department of Education on Federal Work Study for Community Service usage. If you would like to see how your institution's usage compares to other institutions, you can view this report online at www.nationalservice.org/resources/.

For new and continuing programs operated by higher education institutions that are applying for funding, legal applicants must describe their institution's efforts to support community service under FWS. Specifically include:

- the percentage of your school's 2000-2001 FWS funds that were used for community service placements;
- types of service placements funded through FWS funds;
- description of how community service FWS students are trained and supervised;
- description of your office's current relationship to the financial aid office with respect to community service FWS;
- plans for future collaboration to better utilize these funds; and

- description of the facilitators and barriers to your campus' use of FWS for community service.

Participation in National Days of Service

As part of the National Service Network, there are a number of opportunities for your programs to take part in national service days. We expect all national service programs, including AmeriCorps, to participate in one or more days of service, including the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, National Volunteer Week, Youth Service Day, and Make a Difference Day. In addition, we expect programs with AmeriCorps members to participate in other national service activities such as common opening ceremonies (including the administration of an oath or affirmation), orientations, and training.

Cross-Stream Collaboration

In many communities there are several national service initiatives operating side by side. These include VISTA projects, RSVP programs, Senior Companions, Foster Grandparents and AmeriCorps programs funded through their state commissions and through the Corporation, and Learn and Serve America Higher Education or K-12 programs. There may also be other initiatives sponsored by the state commissions. We expect all national service programs to engage in collaborative activities. This includes, but is not limited to, potential collaboration on service activities. We also encourage collaborations around training, volunteer recruitment, program director networking, and National Days of Service.

AmeriCorps on the Internet

Programs with AmeriCorps members must have Internet and e-mail capability. We encourage you to subscribe to the AmeriCorps listserv run by the National Service Resource Center at ETR Associates. For further assistance or information on Internet access or the AmeriCorps listserv, call Susan Hillyard at the National Service Resource Center at 1-800-860-2684, ext. 105.

Web-Based Reporting System

Programs that receive AmeriCorps grants must use the web-based reporting system (WBRS) to enroll AmeriCorps members and track their service hours and accomplishment data to submit progress reports. Use of WBRS requires a computer with access to the World Wide Web.

Member Terms of Service and Selection

Terms of Service

Programs may engage members full-time or part-time. Full-time members must serve at least 1700 hours during a period of not less than nine months and not more than one year. Half-time members must serve at least 900 hours during a period of one or two years as indicated in the approved budget. No member can serve less than 300 hours during a one-year period. Programs may propose at least 300 hours for minimum-time, at least 450 hours for quarter-time, and at least 675 hours for reduced half-time members based on the program design. However, within a program, we generally require all reduced

half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time members to serve the same number of hours. If any reduced part-time program has a need for greater flexibility, we will consider a proposal for two different sets of hours within the same program.

Eligibility for Additional Terms

An individual may receive an education award only for the first and second terms of service in an approved AmeriCorps position. (Please note that an unsuccessful term counts as a term of service for these purposes.) In addition, there are strict limits on the use of federal funds to support an individual serving in a third, or subsequent, term. While members may, in some cases, serve more than one term, mere eligibility for an additional term of service does not, however, guarantee selection or placement. You must base member eligibility for a subsequent term of service on at least a mid-term and end-of term evaluation of members' performance, that demonstrates but is not limited to: (1) members satisfactorily complete required number of hours, (2) members complete assignments, tasks, or projects satisfactorily and (3) members perform satisfactorily in criteria that you clearly communicated both orally and in writing at the beginning of the term of service.

Member Eligibility

An eligible member is an individual: who is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national, or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States; who is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service, unless the member is out of school and enrolled (a) in a full-time, year-round youth corps Program or full-time summer Program as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a) (2)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, or (b) in a Program for economically disadvantaged youth as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a)(9)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 24, inclusive; or has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate [or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award] and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member (unless enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §1091), or who has been determined through an independent assessment conducted by the Program to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent (provided that the Corporation has waived the education attainment requirement for the individual).

Selection

Each AmeriCorps program selects its members and the selection criteria may vary. However, your selection process must be non-partisan, non-political, and non-discriminatory. Additionally, your program must establish minimum qualifications according to the service that members provide. Successful completion of an AmeriCorps orientation period is a mandatory qualification for members. You also must ensure that you do not displace any existing paid employees. We encourage you to select members who possess leadership potential as well as a commitment to the goals of the national service program, regardless of educational level, work experience, or economic background.

Member Benefits

Generally, you must provide a living allowance of between \$9,600 and \$19,200 per year to your full-time members. However, the amount of the living allowance that you may pay members with Corporation funds and other federal funds may not exceed 85% of the minimum living allowance, or \$8,160.

We do not require you to provide a living allowance to half-time, reduced half-time, quarter-time, and minimum-time members. If you choose to provide any half-time members with a living allowance, you may use the following chart to determine the maximum Corporation share:

	# of hours ¹	Maximum Total Living Allowance	Maximum Federal Share of Living Allowance ²
Full-Time	1700	\$19,200.00	\$8,160.00
One Year Half-Time	900	\$ 8,600.00	\$4,320.00
Two Year Half-Time	900	\$ 8,600.00	\$4,320.00 ³
Reduced Half-Time	675	\$ 7,200.00	\$3,240.00
Quarter-Time	450	\$ 4,800.00	\$2,160.00
Minimum-Time	300	\$ 3,360.00	\$1,440.00

Exceptions

Prior Existence: If your program existed prior to the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 (enacted September 21, 1993), the law does not require you to provide living allowances to your members. If you choose to offer living allowances, they are exempt from the minimum requirement but not from the maximum requirement. Thus, you may offer full-time members living allowances between \$0 and \$19,200. If the allowance is less than \$9,600, the portion that you may pay with the Corporation's and other federal funds cannot exceed 85%. For example, if a program chooses to pay its full-time members \$5,000, the Corporation will pay up to 85% of that amount, or \$4,250.

Waiver or Reduction of Living Allowance: We may, at our discretion, waive or reduce the living allowance requirements of your program. You must demonstrate to our satisfaction that such requirements are consistent with the objectives of your program. Additionally you must show that without living allowances, members will be able to meet the necessary and reasonable costs of living in the area in which the program is located. These costs include food, housing, and transportation.

Residential Program: If we have granted a waiver or reduction of the living

¹ Represents the minimum number of hours a member serves.

² Federal share of living allowance is fixed for all positions regardless of hours served (this is current policy of FT and HT positions); programs have the option of adding more than 15% to increase member living allowance; programs are not required to provide living allowance to reduced part-time members.

³ One-half of living allowance is awarded in each of two years.

allowance and your program provides your members room and board, we will consider, on a case-by-case basis, allowing the portion of that living allowance that may be paid using Corporation and other federal funds to be between 85% and 100%.

Education Awards

Most AmeriCorps members who successfully complete a term of service will receive education awards for each year up to two years of service. The following chart shows the relationship between number of hours an AmeriCorps member serves and the education award the member receives based upon successful completion of the term of service.

Title	# of Hours	Education Award
Full-time	at least 1700	\$4,725.00
One Year Half-time	at least 900	\$2,362.50
Two Year Half-time	at least 900	\$2,362.50
Reduced half-time	at least 675	\$1,800.00
Quarter-time	at least 450	\$1,250.00
Minimum-time	at least 300	\$1,000.00

Members have up to seven years from completion of service to use their education award. They may use their awards to pay for any combination of: (1) the costs of attendance at a qualified institution of higher education; (2) the costs of approved school-to-work programs; or (3) the costs of repaying qualified student loans.

While they serve, members who have outstanding qualified student loans may be eligible for forbearance on their payments. To qualify, they must contact their loan holders and submit the required forms to the National Service Trust. Upon successful completion of members' terms of service, we will make payments for interest accrued during the period of forbearance.

Child Care

You must make child care available to any full-time member who is eligible for and needs such assistance in order to participate in the program. We directly fund child care. We pay 100% of the allowance as defined by payment rates of the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG). We can provide technical assistance to your program to help you determine member eligibility, provider eligibility, and child care allowance. Direct payments will be made to the child care providers. We base member eligibility for child care on need. Members' needs must be consistent with the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990:

- Total family income of members must be less than 75% of the state median income, as defined by the state under CCDBG guidelines;
- Members must reside with and be a parent or guardian of a child under the age of 13.

When you accept members in your program that are receiving and continue to receive child care assistance from other sources such as a parent or guardian, they are ineligible for child care from your program. On the other hand, if members become ineligible for

assistance because of their enrollment in your program, or a member certifies that he or she needs child care in order to participate in the program, you must provide child care.

Health Insurance

You must provide each full-time member with health insurance at the time of acceptance into your program if the member is not otherwise covered by a health insurance policy that provides the minimum benefits described below. If, as a result of participation, or if, during the term of service, a member loses coverage through no deliberate act of his or her own, such as parental or spousal job loss, you must provide the member with a basic health insurance that meets our requirements.

Health Insurance Requirements

You must provide health insurance coverage for eligible members. You may obtain health insurance for your members through any provider you choose, as long as the policy provides the minimum benefits and is not excessive in cost.

Minimum benefits

If your program has health insurance coverage, the coverage must provide or exceed these minimum benefits.

Covered Services

Physician services for illness or injury, Hospital room and board, Emergency room, X-ray and laboratory, and Prescription drugs

Limited Coverage

Mental/nervous disorders, Substance abuse

Annual limits

Deductible:

Not more than \$250 per individual

Coinsurance:

Member pays no more than 20% or alternatively, a comparable fixed fee. Exception-mental and substance abuse may require a 50% co-payment

Out-of-pocket:

Not more than \$1,000 per individual

Maximum Benefit:

At least \$50,000

If you elect to use a current health insurance policy that meets the above minimum benefit requirements, upon selection we may require you to provide specific information on the benefits and policy.

Corporation Share of Health Insurance

We pay 85% of the cost of a policy that meets the above requirements as long as we do not determine the cost to be excessive. We do not pay any share of the cost of the policy that does not include the minimum benefits. Nor do we cover any person other than members.

Health Insurance for Half-time Members

In general, we do not pay the costs of health benefits for half-time members unless they serve full-time for a sustained period of time. For example, members may receive benefits when they serve in a summer program for thirty-five hours per week with other members who receive health benefits.

Service Gear

You may use grant funds to pay for a standard Service Gear package (AmeriCorps T-shirt, sweatshirt, hat, pin, decals, and buttons) for members. While it is optional, we encourage you to provide this package to your members. The standard Service Gear package is priced at \$35. Many AmeriCorps members serve in settings where a shirt with a collar is the appropriate attire. If your members need the shirt with a collar, you may include an additional amount of up to \$35, for a maximum total of \$70 of Corporation funds per member in your budget. We will also pay up to \$150 per member for additional safety apparel that is necessary for members to perform their daily service with a justification in the budget narrative. Gear can be ordered online at www.nationalservicecatalog.org.

Reasonable Accommodation For Disabilities

Programs and activities must be accessible to persons with disabilities. You must provide reasonable accommodation to known mental or physical disabilities of otherwise qualified members, service recipients, applicants, and program staff. All selections and project assignments must be made without regard to the need to provide reasonable accommodation. By far, the vast majority of accommodations are inexpensive. For those limited cases where reasonable accommodations are more costly, there may be money available through state commissions to provide accommodations for members serving in an AmeriCorps*State competitive program.

Grievance Procedures

You must establish a grievance procedure for members who believe that they have been unfairly released and for other grievances filed by members or other interested parties. The procedures must include an opportunity for hearing and binding arbitration within statutory deadlines. Additionally, we encourage programs to establish an alternative dispute resolution procedure, such as mediation.

Prohibited Service Activities

While charging time to the AmeriCorps program, accumulating service or training hours, or otherwise engaged in activities associated with the AmeriCorps program or the Corporation, staff and members may not engage in the following activities:

- a. attempting to influence legislation;
- b. organizing or engaging in protests, petitions, boycotts, or strikes;
- c. assisting, promoting, or deterring union organizing;
- d. impairing existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements;

- e. engaging in partisan political activities or other activities designed to influence the outcome of an election to any public office;
- f. participating in, or endorsing, events or activities that are likely to include advocacy for or against political parties, political platforms, political candidates, proposed legislation, or elected officials;
- g. engaging in religious instruction; conducting worship services; providing instruction as part of a Program that includes mandatory religious instruction or worship; constructing or operating facilities devoted to religious instruction or worship; maintaining facilities primarily or inherently devoted to religious instruction or worship; or engaging in any form of religious proselytization;
- h. providing a direct benefit to:
 - i. a for profit entity;
 - ii. a labor union;
 - iii. a partisan political organization;
 - iv. an organization engaged in the religious activities described in the preceding sub-clause, unless Grant funds are not used to support the religious activities; or
 - v. a nonprofit entity that fails to comply with the restrictions contained in section 501(c)(3) of Title 26, except that nothing in this section shall be construed to prevent members or participants from engaging in advocacy activities undertaken at their own initiative.
- i. voter registration drives by AmeriCorps members. In addition to being an unacceptable service activity, Corporation funds may not be used to conduct a voter registration drive;
- j. clerical work, research, or fund raising activities unless such activities are incidental to the member's direct service activities; and
- k. other activities as the Corporation determines will be prohibited, upon notice to the Grantee.

Individuals may exercise their rights as private citizens and may participate in the above activities on their initiative, on non-AmeriCorps time, and using non-Corporation funds. The AmeriCorps logo should not be worn while doing so. In your application for funds, you should specify the actions you will take to ensure that members do not engage in improper activities. Suggestions for compliance with this requirement include signing a certification that contains a listing of prohibitions, including a list in your members' training manuals or adding a clause to members' contracts prohibiting them from engaging in prohibited activities.

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GRANT TERMS AND REQUIREMENTS

Grant Period

We generally provide funding for a three-year project period. Applications must include proposed activities and a detailed proposed budget for the first year of operation, estimated funds you will need in the second and third years of operation, and program objectives for a one year period.

If we approve your application and enter into a multi-year award agreement, we will usually provide funding at the outset only for the first year of the program. The Corporation has no obligation to provide additional funding in subsequent years. Funding for the second and third years of an approved program is contingent upon the availability of funds, satisfactory progress in relation to the approved objectives, submission of proposed changes in activities or objectives, a detailed budget and budget narrative for the applicable program year, and any other criteria established in the award agreement.

Sizes of Grants and Restrictions

The grant size will vary by circumstance, need, and program model. You may have only one application covering a particular project pending before the Corporation at one time. For example, if a national nonprofit organization includes a local affiliate in its application to us, the local affiliate may not seek additional funds for the same project through an AmeriCorps*State application.

Non-Federal Support for Programs

Programs must provide, account for, and document non-federal support for programs. We encourage all programs to raise some funds from the private sector, e.g., corporations, foundations, individuals, local businesses, and nonprofit organizations. Our statute requires, at a minimum, the following aggregate matches: Member Support Costs (at least 15%) including living allowance, FICA, Unemployment Insurance, Worker's Compensation and Health Insurance; and Program Operating Costs (at least 33%) including Staff, Operating Costs, Internal Evaluation, and Administration. However, the Corporation encourages projects to secure greater support from state and local funding sources, including private sources. The selection criteria for grant applications include 15% for Budget/Cost Effectiveness (see page 30). Commitment of applicant organization or host agency to securing resources, i.e., non-federal support for program implementation or sustainability, is now our major focus under this criteria.

The match for member support costs (excluding health insurance) must be in non-federal cash. You may provide your share of operating costs in cash or in kind, and may use non-Corporation federal funds as match, if permitted by the rules governing those federal funds.

Types of Application Submission

- If you are applying for the first time to become an AmeriCorps*State program, you must submit an application following these guidelines.
- If your program is currently in its third year of operation, you must submit a new application following these guidelines if you wish to be considered for AmeriCorps funding. As part of the application, you must also complete a summary describing program impact and accomplishments for all previous years of AmeriCorps funding. In addition to your new application, our staff will review and consider previous grant performance information and data from our management information systems, including enrollment and retention rates, and impact data. We will take into consideration the quality of your program and the extent to which you have successfully met your outcome objectives in determining whether to recommend funding for another three year cycle.
- If your program seeks funds for its second or third year of operation, you must submit a continuation request following these guidelines.

Types of AmeriCorps Grants

Operating Grants

Operating grants support fully developed plans to establish a new national service program or to support, expand or replicate existing national service programs. We may award operating grants for the purpose of replicating successful program models at other sites. We define replication as taking an existing program model and using it in a different setting with a different administrative structure.

Planning Grants

In recognition of the critical role that community-based organizations play, the Corporation conducted a meeting of faith-based and small community organizations to identify steps the Corporation could take to make our resources more accessible to such organizations. We learned that small community organizations (both secular and faith-based) need (1) more information about the resources and support available from federal, state, and local agencies; and (2) training and technical assistance to build the capacity to use these resources in meeting community needs. Based upon these findings, the Corporation is accepting planning grants under AmeriCorps*State competitive for the 2002 – 2003 program year. State commissions may choose to accept planning grants in their formula category. All planning grants are subject to a minimum 33% grantee share.

The purpose of planning grants is to bring a program to the verge of implementation so that it may compete successfully for operating assistance in the following grant cycle. The Corporation will make planning grants available to eligible applicants that have identified a sound concept for a national service program, but that require resources in order to plan, develop, and prepare the program for implementation. While the sizes and terms of planning grants will vary by circumstance and need, in general they will

range up to \$50,000 and cover a period of six months to a year.

Education Awards Program

Under the Education Awards Program, we provide an allotment of national service education awards to organizations that can support most program and participant costs through other sources that meet the AmeriCorps program requirements, and that are judged to be high-quality according to the selection criteria. Under this program, we waive some of the AmeriCorps program requirements. For example, Education Awards Programs do not have to provide child care, a living allowance, or health care to participants. If you wish to apply for the Education Awards Program, do not use these application guidelines. We have a separate set of guidelines for this program that you can request.

Responsibilities for Programs Using AmeriCorps Funds

The Corporation's requirements for AmeriCorps are set forth in the regulations and in this application. In addition to being thoroughly familiar with the regulations, you should read these application guidelines carefully because in some cases, more specific information is provided here.

The regulations for programs funded by AmeriCorps were published in the Federal Register on March 23, 1994 (45 CFR Parts 2510, 2513, et. al.) and may be available at your public library or can be found at www.nara.gov/fedreg/.

Federal Financial Management and Grant Administration Requirements

As with all federal grant programs, it is the responsibility of all grantees funded by AmeriCorps to ensure appropriate stewardship of federal funds entrusted to them. Under our regulations, each grantee must maintain financial management systems that provide accurate, current, and complete disclosure of the financial results of its program. To meet this requirement, you must have adequate accounting practices and procedures, internal controls, audit trails, and cost allocation procedures. OMB Circular A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments and Nonprofit Organizations, requires all organizations to have financial audits if they annually expend \$300,000 or more under federal awards. This requirement applies to the organization's total expenditures each fiscal year under all of its federal awards, not just an AmeriCorps grant.

As with all federal grant programs, you must ensure that your programs or activities, including those of any subgrantees, will be conducted, and facilities operated, in compliance with the applicable civil rights statutes and their implementing regulation. You must obtain assurances of such compliance prior to extending federal financial assistance to subgrantees. For civil rights purposes, all programs and projects funded or receiving service members under the National and Community Service Act, as amended, are programs or activities receiving federal financial assistance.

By federal statute and regulation, a person, including members, service recipients, or program staff, may not, on the grounds of race, color, national origin, sex, age, political affiliation, disability (for otherwise qualified individuals with disabilities), or in most cases religion, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, or be otherwise subjected to discrimination, directly or through contractual arrangements, under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance. By Corporation policy, participation in the Corporation's programs and projects must be based on merit and equal opportunity for all, without regard to factors such as sexual orientation, marital or parental status, military service, or religious, community, or social affiliations, in addition to the statutory grounds.

Monitoring Responsibilities

If you are approved for an AmeriCorps grant, you are responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the grant and sub-grant-supported activities to assure you are in compliance with applicable federal requirements and you achieve your performance goals. Monitoring must cover each program, function, or activity. You are responsible for ensuring program quality and that your program has an impact on the problems facing the communities in which it operates. This includes monitoring the service of members. You are responsible for the timely and accurate documentation of member eligibility and service hours. Each program should develop systems that closely track and monitor these issues.

A number of factors may make monitoring a challenge for programs. These include individual placements, programs that are spread out geographically, and programs that attempt to address many issue areas at once. If your program design includes one of these challenges, you should address it specifically in your application and provide specific strategies for monitoring. Strategies that may facilitate program monitoring include: recruiting and enrolling members who can work independently; providing appropriate orientation, ongoing training, and a means of regular communication; selecting strong host sites and ensuring strong support from direct-line supervision of members; and narrowing the range of tasks members perform to make monitoring easier.

Reporting and Evaluation Requirements

Every program must develop a system for collecting and organizing data on an ongoing basis. The most common reporting mechanisms are progress and final reports. In addition, your program must cooperate with national program evaluation studies we may undertake. Also, you must compile data on civil rights compliance, as detailed in the AmeriCorps Grant Provisions that are part of your grant award.

Your program must have a system that allows you to evaluate and monitor your program activities. You must:

- develop annual objectives;
- track progress toward those annual objectives;
- institute management procedures that provide regular "customer feedback" that will be used to improve program quality; and – collect additional descriptive

and demographic data (e.g., the member enrollment and exit forms, operating site information forms).

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REVIEW PROCESS AND SELECTION CRITERIA

We frequently receive far more applications than we can award. We select applications using an extensive, multi-stage process that may include reviews by state commissions, peer review panels, and Corporation staff with approval when appropriate, by our Chief Executive Officer or Board of Directors.

During the peer review process we use outside experts including community service practitioners, educators, administrators, former national service participants, and specialists in the areas of environment, public safety, education, and other human needs to evaluate the quality of applications. During the staff review we determine the relative quality among applications but also consider statutory funding requirements and other emphases addressed in these guidelines (i.e., volunteer mobilization and support to community organizations). Before staff recommends a program for approval, we may conduct clarifying interviews in person or through conference calls.

The following is a list of characteristics of the programs we fund including statutory requirements we must consider:

- programs that are high-quality, innovative, have the potential to be replicated by programs in other areas, and that can sustain themselves or the service activities with other support when the grant period ends;
- programs that propose to foster Federal Work Study students in community service;
- a wide range of program designs and approaches to community service that meet community needs;
- programs that are geographically diverse across the state, region, or country and include urban and rural areas;
- programs that sponsor AmeriCorps activities in areas of high concentrations of low-income people;
- programs in areas affected by military downsizing;
- programs that demonstrate they can effectively develop and administer an AmeriCorps program with proper supervision, monitoring, evaluation, and financial controls; and
- applicants who submit applications from small states as defined by the Corporation.

In addition, we seek a diverse participant pool that includes young and older adults, a balance of individuals who have not attended college and those with college education experience, approximately equal numbers of men and women, individuals with disabilities and individuals of all races, ethnicities, and diverse economic backgrounds.

Selection Criteria

We use the following criteria to determine quality and select programs and projects that will receive assistance. These criteria apply to program outcomes as well as the initial

selection. State commissions may include additional criteria for programs they propose to fund with formula funds. Selection criteria for planning grants are on page 44.

Program Design (60%)

Getting Things Done

- Well-documented compelling community need
- Well-designed activities with measurable goals and objectives that meet community needs
- Well-defined roles for participants that lead to measurable outcomes or impact
- Effective involvement of target community in planning and implementation
- Ability to provide or secure effective technical assistance

Participant Development

- Effective plans for recruiting, developing, training, supervising, and recognizing participants
- Well-designed activities that promote an ethic of service and civic responsibility
- Well-designed plan to engage participants in high-quality service learning as defined by the Corporation¹

Strengthening Communities

- Mobilization of community resources, including volunteers
- Strong community partnerships, including well-defined roles for community partners
- Potential for sustainability, innovation, or replicability of project activities
- Enhanced capacity of organizations and institutions
- Bring together people of diverse backgrounds

Organizational Capacity (25%)

- Ability to provide sound programmatic and fiscal oversight
- Sound track record in the issue area the project will address
- Well-defined roles for staff and administrators
- Well-designed plan or systems for self-assessment, evaluation, and continuous improvement

Budget/Cost Effectiveness (15%)

- Commitment of applicant organization or host agency to securing resources, i.e., non-federal support, for program implementation or sustainability (this is now the major focus under this criteria)
- Adequate budget to support program design
- Cost-effective within program guidance

The bullets under each sub-heading describe what we consider important and what you should include in your application narrative. Program Design includes three sub-

¹ We encourage all applicants to include service-learning activities in their program design. However, this is only a selection criterion for Learn and Serve America.

categories and represents 60 percent of the basis we use to evaluate and select each program. The relative importance and rank order of the sub-categories for AmeriCorps is Getting Things Done, Participant Development, and Strengthening Communities.

Reporting Requirements for Applicants Previously Funded by the Corporation

If your program is continuing or recompeting as a new applicant under these guidelines, all reporting must be up-to-date. Our staff will consider your program's record regarding timely receipt of reports and forms when making final funding recommendations.

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IMPORTANT NOTICE

The Corporation for National and Community Service is changing its application instructions in preparation for an on-line grant application system in fiscal year 2003. We are currently seeking Office of Management and Budget (OMB) approval. Until we receive final approval, we are providing the following application instructions to you in draft form.

You may use these application instructions and forms to plan your program and develop your application. We expect the application instructions and forms to be approved by OMB by mid-January, 2002. At this time we will post any changes on our website: www.nationalservice.org and provide the approved forms and instructions to each state service commission. Please check our website to see if there are any changes you may need to make to your application. If so, contact the state service commission in your state.

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AMERICORPS*STATE APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS-- DRAFT

If you wish to establish an AmeriCorps*State program, you must first submit an application to your state commission on national and community service by the deadline the state commission has established.

Compliance Requirements

You must submit one unbound, single-sided original and two (2) copies of the application. All applicants are encouraged to voluntarily submit an additional four (4) copies of the application to expedite the review process. Hard copies must arrive at the Corporation no later than 5:00 Eastern Standard Time, February 26, 2002. Facsimiles or electronic versions will not be accepted. Type and double-space the submission package in not less than 12-point font size, with one-inch margins. Please number the narrative pages. You must follow the page limits specified below. If you exceed the page limits, we will remove any excess pages before reviewing your application. We will not accept appendices. This includes annual reports, videos, brochures or any supplementary material not requested in the application.

We will not review any submission that does not comply with all of the above requirements except under extenuating circumstances as determined by us.

Review Criteria for New Applications

The evaluation criteria and their percentage weights are:

Program Design	60%
Getting Things Done	
Participant Development	
Strengthening Communities	
Organizational Capacity	25%
Budget/Cost Effectiveness	15%

I. New Program Application Instructions

General Submission Information. New applicants must submit an application that consists of the following components in the following order. If your program is currently in its third year of operation, you must apply as a new program (recompete).

- **Part I SF-424 Face Sheet**
- **Part II Budget Form and Budget Narrative**
- **Part III Program Narrative**
- **Objectives Summary**
- **Assurances and Certifications**

Part I:

SF-424 Face Sheet

Follow the face sheet instructions.

Part II:

Budget Form and Budget Narrative

Prepare a budget narrative following the budget narrative instructions. From the budget narrative, complete the form.

Part III:

Program Narrative Instructions for AmeriCorps*State

The purpose of the program narrative is for you to provide a project plan with a clear and compelling justification for awarding the requested funds. Part III covers the multi-year proposed project period for which you are requesting approval. The budget and budget narrative in Part II should support the proposed program described in this section.

Because this application serves the needs of all Corporation for National and Community Service programs, you may not be required to complete all sections. Be sure to use the same headings provided below when completing your program narrative. If a given section does not apply to your application, please include the heading and write “Not applicable.”

The Narrative Sections include:

- A. Executive Summary (one page, single-spaced maximum)
- B. Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts (two page, single-spaced maximum)
- C. Needs and Service Activities [Getting Things Done]
- D. Strengthening the Community
- E. Recruiting and Developing Members
- F. Program Management
- G. Organizational Capacity
- H. Other – Budget/Cost Effectiveness

There is a 20 page, double-spaced page limit on sections C-H.

Note: The Corporation for National and Community Service Selection Criteria is:

Program Design (60%) Part III, sections A, B, C, D, and E
Getting Things Done, Member Development and Strengthening Communities
Objectives.

Organizational Capacity (25%) Part III, sections F and G.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness (15%) Part III, section H

A. Executive Summary

The purpose of the executive summary is for you to provide short, clear, concise statements about your proposed program. It is, in fact, a series of “sound bites” that provides a clear picture of your program and the service it will complete.

Provide a clear overview of your program. This should include the four elements described below.

1. Statement of Need

The overall purpose of AmeriCorps is to help local communities address critical unmet needs. Provide a description of the critical need that has prompted your organization to submit an AmeriCorps proposal. Examples: Sometown has a city-wide high school drop out rate of 50%... Only 42% of Sometown’s first through third graders read at grade level... Only 2% of the homeless population get assistance in moving to permanent housing... The pollution in the Sometown River has steadily increased over the past 10 years so that fish and other marine animals are no longer able to live in the River.

2. Mission Statement

Include the mission statement for your agency, organization or collaborative that is supporting the AmeriCorps program. In this case, we define “mission statement” as a description of the overarching purpose of the organization. State how the mission of your organization relates to the identified need(s) above. If there is not a clear connection between the statement of need(s) and the mission of your organization, please describe why you are supporting a program that addresses the need listed above. Examples of mission statements: to enhance awareness and promote citizen involvement in natural resource management; to connect educational institutions with the community in order to facilitate the application of knowledge and learning; to assist individuals and families in accessing community resources.

3. Expected Impact

Explain what part of the identified need you will address in your proposed AmeriCorps program. For instance, if the need is a soaring rate of high school drop-outs in the city, the expected impact of the program might be to decrease the high school drop-out rate by 10% in two high schools.

4. Summary of Program Design

Provide a concise description of your proposed AmeriCorps program. This should include the activities that AmeriCorps members perform to reach the expected impact of the program. The summary of the program design should include a brief description of the overall organizational structure of the program including grantee, sub-grantee(s) and/or host organization relationships. You do not have to identify each host organization.

B. Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts

First time applicants: please leave blank. Current or previous AmeriCorps grantees are required to complete this section.

For all prior years of AmeriCorps funding, restate your program's objectives and provide a clear description of program impact and accomplishments in all three of the objective areas--Getting Things Done, Participant Development and Strengthening Communities.

C. Needs and Service Activities

The Needs and Service Activities section is equivalent to the previously labeled category, "Getting Things Done." It describes the direct service that will occur in the proposed program.

Community Needs

1. Restate (from the executive summary) the specific compelling community need(s) your program will address and describe the process by which the local community identified the need(s).
2. Explain how the program objectives meet the community need(s).

Desired Impact

3. Identify the desired change or impact your program will have as a result of your objectives and how you will evaluate whether or not you have achieved the desired change or impact.

Proposed Activities

4. Provide a detailed description of the proposed service activities that members will perform (including a description of a "typical day" for a member) and how those activities will lead to measurable outcomes/impact.
5. Describe how the activities will help meet the goals of the program and impact the identified need(s); how "getting things done" objectives directly relate to the activities of the members and how outcomes or impact will be measured.

D. Strengthening the Community

AmeriCorps strengthens communities through community involvement and consultation. We believe that local involvement and input is vital to the development of quality service programs that sustain and build communities. This includes extensive broad-based local input to design, implement, and evaluate your project.

Community You Will Serve

1. Describe the community you will serve, the relationship between your program and the community, and ways in which the program you propose builds on existing programs and does not duplicate a program already in the community.
2. Describe how AmeriCorps member activities will strengthen the community.

Community Partnerships

3. Describe community partnerships with your program and the role of each partner organization (including responsibility for various program aspects such as recruitment, design of program service activities, training, supervision, evaluation and grants management).
4. Describe your relationship with and support for the efforts of civic, community, educational, and faith-based organizations.
5. Describe the process you used for selecting the community partners with whom the AmeriCorps members will perform service; how you will build support for the program among a variety of community sectors and bring together people of diverse backgrounds; how you will cultivate, strengthen, and expand partnerships; the types of support and coordination you have with local governments, community based organizations and others.
6. **For higher education institution applicants only:** Describe your institution's efforts to support community service under Federal Work Study. Specifically include:
 - the percentage of your school's 2000-2001 FWS funds that were used for community service placements;
 - types of service placements funded through Federal Work Study funds;
 - description of how community service FWS students are trained and supervised;
 - description of your office's current relationship to the financial aid office with respect to community service Federal Work Study;
 - plans for future collaboration to better utilize these funds; and
 - description of the facilitators and barriers to your campus' use of Federal Work Study for community service.

Mobilization of Community Resources including Volunteers

7. Describe how you will mobilize community resources to support your program. How, if at all, will members participate in community activities?
8. Describe your plan for mobilizing, supporting and managing volunteers. State how this fits into your program design, if at all.
9. Describe your strategy to build the capacity of the community to support the service activities of this program when federal funding no longer supports it.

10. How, if at all, will you collaborate with other national service programs in order to support the proposed project?

E. Recruiting and Developing Members

Your program builds strong communities when it engages diverse members and staff in common service. You should actively seek to include members and staff from the communities where your project operates as well as men and women of different races, ethnicities, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. The AmeriCorps members in your program should receive training specific to their service activities as well as training on AmeriCorps and the ethic of service.

Recruitment and Selection

1. Identify the skills and characteristics that AmeriCorps members will need to perform the proposed service activities including minimum qualifications and any specialized skills required to carry out service assignments.
2. Describe how you will recruit members, including the optional use of the web based AmeriCorps Recruitment Placement System (ACRPS). Describe the selection process and criteria for choosing AmeriCorps members who fulfill the required qualifications.
3. Provide a description of members you expect to recruit, including racial or ethnic background, age, socioeconomic status, gender, educational attainment, and what measure you will take to ensure diversity in your team of members.

Member Development

4. Describe how you will develop a sense of AmeriCorps identity among the your members and in the community.
5. Describe how members will develop an understanding of good citizenship and be inspired by the community to adopt an ethic of service. Identify the specific training you will provide and your use of service experiences to help members acquire the knowledge, skills and values needed to be active citizens of communities.
6. Describe the methods you will use to ensure that AmeriCorps members build relationships with one another within each program site with people of diverse backgrounds as well as with AmeriCorps members in other programs and sites.

Training and Development Activities

7. Describe the member development objectives of your program and explain how they prepare the members for service in your program and beyond.
8. Describe the key elements of your plan for member training and explain how they will help you achieve your member development objectives.

F. Program/Project Management

In this section, please identify your specific plans and strategies for overall management of the AmeriCorps program you propose.

Include the following topics, if applicable.

1. **Selection and supervision of host organizations.** Describe the process and criteria you use to select host organizations; how you will monitor host sites; and communication plans.
2. **Ability to provide training and technical assistance.** Describe your plans for providing host organizations with training and technical assistance. In particular, describe your plans for initial orientation and training of host organizations and systems you will use to ascertain ongoing training and technical assistance needs.
3. **Ability to monitor your overall program and to evaluate progress toward annual objectives.** Describe your plans for monitoring compliance with program requirements and evaluating progress toward annual objectives. Include plans for identifying issues, strengths and weaknesses and gathering feedback from and providing feedback to members, host sites, and partners.

G. Organizational Capacity

Please identify your organization's overall capacity to operate an AmeriCorps program. In this section include the following topics.

1. **Capacity to provide fiscal oversight.** Show how this program will fit within the total operating budget of your organization. Provide an organizational chart showing where you will place the program within your organization. Describe your experience in administering a federal grant. Describe your capacity to provide on site monitoring of financial and other required systems utilized to administer the AmeriCorps grant.
2. **Sound track record in the issue area(s) the project will address.** Describe your organization's experience with the programmatic initiatives you propose in this application and relevant major accomplishments in these areas.
3. **Principal program staff.** Identify the key staff positions that will be responsible for overall program administration and percentage of time dedicated to the AmeriCorps program; background and experience of these staff members; plans to recruit, select, train, and support additional staff if necessary.
4. **Plans for Evaluation.** Describe plans to provide evaluation training and technical assistance. Discuss plans (if any) to design and conduct evaluations. Describe plans to develop regular feedback from your

primary stakeholders and how you will use feedback to improve the program quality.

H. Budget/Cost Effectiveness:

1. **Non-federal support and sustainability.** Describe the program's relationship with and support from relevant local units of government, community-based organizations, members, citizens and others. Discuss how program will attempt to build community support and support from state and local funding sources, including private sources. Describe how the program will meet the financial matching requirements. Discuss plans for sustaining the program beyond the grant term.
2. **Budget that supports the program design.** Discuss how: the program narrative, budget and budget narratives correspond; the budget reflects program goals and design; the match requirements are met; the costs clearly demonstrate support for the AmeriCorps program component; the costs across sites demonstrate appropriate consistency with one another as well as with national program goals.
3. **Cost-effectiveness.** Describe sources of additional financial or other types of support for the program.

Objectives

Complete the AmeriCorps Objectives Worksheets following the instructions. Your objectives should be clearly linked to the program narrative and focus on the areas in which you expect to make the greatest impact. Allow time so that you address all of the components needed in developing an objective. Once you have completed a worksheet for each objective, transfer each summary statement onto the AmeriCorps Program Objectives Summary Form. Submit all worksheets and the form to your state commission for review. Submit only the AmeriCorps Program Objectives Summary Form to us.

Assurances and Certifications

Read the certifications and assurances carefully. When you have done so, complete the form which certifies that your organization will comply with all the required assurances and certifications.

II. Continuation Instructions

General Submission Information. Continuation instructions apply only to programs or statewide initiatives that are currently in their first or second year of operation. You should include the information below in your continuation request. Please note: individual state commissions may ask AmeriCorps*State programs to submit additional state-specific information. State commissions also establish general submission dates and requirements.

- **SF-424 Face Sheet**
- **Next Year's Plan.** Narrative of 3 to 5 pages covering changes to the previous year's program activities and/or program objectives, how your program will support the efforts of community and faith-based organizations in meeting community needs, and your plans to provide training and the use of service experiences to help members acquire the knowledge, skills, and values needed to be active citizens of communities.

If you are a higher education institution describe your institution's efforts to support community service under Federal Work Study. Specifically include:

- the percentage of your school's 2000-2001 FWS funds that were used for community service placements;
- types of service placements funded through Federal Work Study funds;
- description of how community service FWS students are trained and supervised;
- description of your office's current relationship to the financial aid office with respect to community service Federal Work Study;
- plans for future collaboration to better utilize these funds; and
- description of the facilitators and barriers to your campus' use of Federal Work Study for community service.

Include also any specific Corporation requests for responses to feedback from site visits, progress report reviews, or any additional information requested by state commissions.

- **Objective Summary Form** (if you are changing any of your objectives)
- **Budget Form and Budget Narrative**

III. Planning Grant Application Instructions

General Submission Information. Planning grant applicants must submit an application that consists of the following components in the following order.

- **Part I** **SF-424 Face Sheet**
- **Part II** **Budget Form and Budget Narrative**
- **Part III** **Planning Grant Narrative (10 page, double-spaced maximum page limit)**
- **Assurances and Certifications**

Part I:

SF-424 Face Sheet

Follow the face sheet instructions.

Part II:

Budget Form and Budget Narrative

Prepare a budget narrative following the budget narrative instructions. From the budget narrative, complete the form. A and B on the budget form are not applicable to planning grants. Planning grants are subject to a minimum 33% grantee share.

Part III:

Planning Grant Narrative

The purpose of the program narrative is for you to provide a project plan with a clear and compelling justification for awarding the requested funds. The budget and budget narrative in Part II should support the proposed program described in this section. The Narrative Sections include:

- A. Executive Summary
- B. Needs and Service Activities [Getting Things Done]
- C. Strengthening the Community
- D. Organizational Capacity
- E. Budget/Cost Effectiveness

Note: The Corporation for National and Community Service Selection Criteria is:

Program Design (60%)	Part III, sections A, B, and C
Organizational Capacity (25%)	Part III, section D
Budget/Cost Effectiveness (15%)	Part III, section E

A. Executive Summary

The purpose of the executive summary is for you to provide short, clear, concise statements about your proposed program. It is, in fact, a series of “sound bites” that provides a clear picture of your program and the service it will complete.

Provide a clear overview of your program. This should include the four elements described below.

1. Statement of Need

The overall purpose of AmeriCorps is to help local communities address critical unmet needs. Provide a description of the critical need that has prompted your organization to submit an AmeriCorps proposal. Examples: Sometown has a city-wide high school drop out rate of 50%... Only 42% of Sometown's first through third graders read at grade level... Only 2% of the homeless population get assistance in moving to permanent housing... The pollution in the Sometown River has steadily increased over the past 10 years so that fish and other marine animals are no longer able to live in the River.

2. Mission Statement

Include the mission statement for your agency, organization or collaborative. In this case, we define "mission statement" as a description of the overarching purpose of the organization. State how the mission of your organization relates to the identified need(s) above. Examples of mission statements: to enhance awareness and promote citizen involvement in natural resource management; to connect educational institutions with the community in order to facilitate the application of knowledge and learning; to assist individuals and families in accessing community resources.

3. Expected Impact

Explain which part of the identified need you expect to address. For instance, if the need is a soaring rate of high school drop-outs in the city, the expected impact of the program might be to decrease the high school drop-out rate by 10% in two high schools.

4. Summary of Plan

Provide a concise description of your proposed AmeriCorps program concept. Describe how you will use the planning funds to plan, develop and prepare the program for implementation.

B. Needs and Service Activities

The Needs and Service Activities section is equivalent to the previously labeled category, "Getting Things Done." It describes the direct service that will occur in the proposed program.

Community Needs

Describe the process by which the local community identified the need(s).

Proposed Activities

1. Provide a description of the types of service activities that members may perform related to the AmeriCorps program concept.

2. How will these types of activities lead to measurable outcomes/impact?

C. Strengthening the Community

AmeriCorps strengthens communities through community involvement and consultation. We believe that local involvement and input is vital to the development of quality service programs that sustain and build communities. This includes extensive broad-based local input to design, implement, and evaluate your project.

Community Partnerships

1. Describe your relationship with and support for the efforts of civic, community, educational, and faith-based organizations.
2. Describe the process you will use for selecting the community partners with whom the AmeriCorps members will perform service.

Mobilization of Community Resources including Volunteers

2. Describe your plan for mobilizing, supporting and managing community resources and volunteers.
4. Describe the strategy you will use to build the capacity of the community to support the service activities of this program when federal funding is no longer available.

D. Organizational Capacity

Please identify your organization's overall capacity to operate an AmeriCorps program. In this section include the following topics.

1. Capacity to provide programmatic and fiscal oversight.
2. Sound track record in the issue area(s) the project will address.

E. Budget/Cost Effectiveness:

1. Non-federal support and sustainability

Describe the program's relationship with and support from relevant local units of government, community-based organizations, members, citizens and others.

2. Budget that supports the program design

Describe how resources will be obtained to support the program design. Describe how you will meet the match requirement.

IV. Application Instructions for State Commissions Submitting a New Statewide Initiative Plan

General Submission Information. Submit an application that consists of the following components in the following order. If the statewide initiative plan is currently in its third year of operation, you must submit a new plan.

- **Part I. SF-424 Face Sheet**
- **Part II. Budget Form and Budget Narrative**
- **Part III. Program Narrative for AmeriCorps*State**
- **Objectives**
- **Assurances and Certifications**

Part I. SF-424 Face Sheet

Follow the face sheet instructions.

Part II. SF-424 Budget Form and Budget Narrative

Prepare a budget narrative following the budget narrative instructions.
From the budget narrative, complete the form.

Part III. Program Narrative Instructions for AmeriCorps*State

The purpose of the program narrative is for you to provide a project plan with a clear and compelling justification for awarding the requested funds. Part III covers the multi-year proposed project period for which you are requesting approval. The budget and budget narrative in Part II should support the proposed program described in this section.

Be sure to use the same headings provided below when completing your program narrative.

The Narrative Sections include:

- A. Executive Summary (one page, single-spaced maximum)
- B. Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts (two page, single-spaced maximum)
- C. Needs and Service Activities [Getting Things Done]
- D. Strengthening the Community
- E. Recruiting and Developing Members
- F. Program Management
- G. Organizational Capacity
- H. Other – Budget/Cost Effectiveness

There is a 20 page, double-spaced limit on sections C-H.

Note: The Corporation for National and Community Service Selection Criteria is:

Program Design (60%)
Part III, sections A, B, C, D, and E
Getting Things Done, Member Development and Strengthening Communities
Objectives.

Organizational Capacity (25%)
Part III, sections F and G.

Budget/Cost Effectiveness (15%)
Part III, section H

A. Executive Summary

The purpose of the executive summary is for you to provide short, clear, concise statements about your proposed program. It is, in fact, a series of “sound bites” that provides a clear picture of your program and the service it will complete.

Provide a clear overview of your program. This should include the four elements described below.

1. Statement of Need

The overall purpose of AmeriCorps is to help communities address critical unmet needs. Provide a description of the critical statewide need that has prompted you to submit an AmeriCorps proposal. Examples: Some state has a high school drop out rate of 50% ... Only 42% of Some state’s first through third graders read at grade level... Only 2% of the homeless population get assistance in moving to permanent housing... The pollution in the Somestate’s River has steadily increased over the past 10 years so that fish and other marine animals are no longer able to live in the River.

2. Mission Statement

Include the mission statement for the lead agency, organization or collaborative that is supporting the AmeriCorps program. In this case, we define “mission statement” as a description of the overarching purpose of the organization. State how the mission of your organization relates to the identified need(s) above. If there is not a clear connection between the statement of need(s) and the mission of your organization, please describe why you are supporting a program that addresses the need listed above. Examples of mission statements: to enhance awareness and promote citizen involvement in natural resource management; to connect educational institutions with the community in order to facilitate the application of knowledge and learning; to assist individuals and families in accessing community resources.

3. Expected Impact

Explain what part of the identified need you will address in your proposed AmeriCorps program. For instance, if the need is a soaring rate of high school drop-outs in the state, the expected impact of the program might be to decrease the high school drop-out rate by 10% in high schools included in the statewide plan.

4. Summary of Program Design

Provide a concise description of your proposed AmeriCorps program. This should include the activities that AmeriCorps members perform to reach the expected impact of the program. The summary of the program design should include a brief description of the overall organizational structure of the program including grantee, sub-grantee(s) and/or host organization relationships. You do not have to identify each host organization.

B. Summary of Accomplishments and Impacts

First time applicants: please leave blank. Current or previous AmeriCorps grantees are required to complete this section.

1. For all prior years of AmeriCorps funding, restate your program's objectives and provide a clear description of program impact and accomplishments in all three of the objective areas--Getting Things Done, Participant Development and Strengthening Communities.

C. Needs and Service Activities

The Needs and Service Activities section is equivalent to the previously labeled category, "Getting Things Done." It describes the direct service that will occur in the proposed program.

Community Needs

1. Restate (from the executive summary) the specific compelling statewide/community need(s) your program will address and describe the process by which the local, regional or statewide community identified the need(s).
2. Explain how the program objectives meet the community need(s).

Desired Impact

3. Identify the desired change or impact your program will have as a result of your objectives and how you will evaluate whether or not you have achieved the desired change or impact.

Proposed Activities

4. Provide types of community service activities members will perform and how those activities will lead to measurable outcomes/impact.
5. Describe how the activities will help meet the goals of the program and impact the identified need(s); how "getting things done" objectives directly

relate to the activities of the members and how outcomes or impact will be measured.

D. Strengthening the Community

AmeriCorps strengthens communities through community involvement and consultation. We believe that local involvement and input is vital to the development of quality service programs that sustain and build communities. This includes extensive broad-based local input to design, implement, and evaluate your project.

Communities You Will Serve

1. Describe the communities you will serve, the relationship between your program and the communities, and ways in which the program you propose builds on existing programs and does not duplicate a program already in the various communities.
2. Describe how AmeriCorps member activities will strengthen these communities.

Community Partnerships

3. Describe community partnerships with your program and the role of each collaboration partner organization (including responsibility for various program aspects such as recruitment, design of program service activities, training, supervision, evaluation and grants management).
4. Describe your relationship with and support for the efforts of civic, community, educational, and faith-based organizations.
5. Describe the process you used for selecting the community partners with whom the AmeriCorps members will perform service; how you will build support for the program among a variety of community sectors and bring together people of diverse backgrounds; how you will cultivate, strengthen, and expand partnerships; the types of support and coordination you have with local governments, community based organizations and others.

Mobilization of Community Resources including Volunteers

7. Describe how you will mobilize community resources to support your program. How, if at all, will members participate in community activities?
8. Describe your plan for mobilizing, supporting and managing volunteers across the state. State how this fits into your program design, if at all.
9. Describe your strategy to build the capacity of the communities to support the service activities of this program when federal funding no longer supports it.
10. How, if at all, will you collaborate with other national service programs in order to support the proposed project?

E. Recruiting and Developing Members

Your program builds strong communities when it engages diverse members and staff in common service. You should actively seek to include members and staff from the

communities where your project operates as well as men and women of different races, ethnicities, education levels, socioeconomic backgrounds, and physical and mental abilities. The AmeriCorps members in your program should receive training specific to their service activities as well as training on AmeriCorps and the ethic of service.

Recruitment and Selection

1. Identify the skills and characteristics that AmeriCorps members will need to perform the proposed service activities including minimum qualifications and any specialized skills required to carry out service assignments.
2. Describe how you will recruit members, including the optional use of the web based AmeriCorps Recruitment Placement System (ACRPS). Describe the selection process and criteria for choosing AmeriCorps members who fulfill the required qualifications.
3. Provide a description of members you expect to recruit, including racial or ethnic background, age, socioeconomic status, gender, educational attainment, and what measure you will take to ensure diversity in your team of members.

Member Development

4. Describe how you will develop a sense of AmeriCorps identity among the your members and in the community.
5. Describe how members will develop an understanding of good citizenship and be inspired by community to adopt an ethic of service. Identify the specific training you will provide and your use of service experiences to help members acquire the knowledge, skills and values needed to be active citizens of communities.
6. Describe the methods you will use to ensure that AmeriCorps members build relationships with one another within each program site with people of diverse backgrounds as well as with AmeriCorps members in other programs and sites.

Training and Development Activities

7. Describe the member development objectives of your program and explain how they prepare the members for service in your program and beyond.
8. Describe the key elements of your plan for member training and explain how they will help you achieve your member development objectives.

F. Program/Project Management

In this section, please identify your specific plans and strategies for overall management of the AmeriCorps program you propose.

Include the following topics, if applicable.

1. **Selection and supervision of host organizations.** Describe the process and criteria you use to select host organizations; how you will monitor host sites; communication plans.

2. **Ability to provide training and technical assistance.** Describe your plans for providing host organizations with training and technical assistance. In particular, describe your plans for initial orientation and training of host organizations and systems you will use to ascertain ongoing training and technical assistance needs.
3. **Ability to monitor your overall program and to evaluate progress toward annual objectives.** Describe your plans for monitoring compliance with program requirements and evaluating progress toward annual objectives. Include plans for identifying issues, strengths and weaknesses and gathering feedback from and providing feedback to members, host sites, and partners.

G. Organizational Capacity

Please identify your organization's overall capacity to operate an AmeriCorps program. In this section include the following topics.

1. **Request for Proposal:** Describe your request for proposal process for selecting a lead agency and sites or subgrantees.
2. **Capacity to provide fiscal oversight.** Show how this program will fit within the total operating budget of your organization or collaborative. Provide an organizational chart showing where you will place the program within your organization. Describe experience of the collaboration in administering a federal grant. Describe your organization's/collaboration's capacity to provide on site monitoring of financial and other required systems utilized to administer the AmeriCorps grant.
3. **Sound track record in the issue area(s) the project will address.** Describe your organization's/collaboration's experience with the programmatic initiatives you propose in this application and relevant major accomplishments in these areas.
4. **Principal program staff.** Identify the key staff positions that will be responsible for overall program administration and percentage of time dedicated to the AmeriCorps program; background and experience of these staff members; plans to recruit, select, train, and support additional staff if necessary.
5. **Plans for Evaluation.** Describe plans to provide evaluation training and technical assistance. Discuss plans (if any) to design and conduct evaluations. Describe plans to develop regular feedback from your primary stakeholders and how you will use feedback to improve the program quality.

H. Budget/Cost Effectiveness:

1. **Non-federal support and sustainability.** Describe the program's relationship with and support from relevant local units of government, community-based organizations, members, citizens and others. Discuss how program will attempt to build community support and support from state and local funding sources, including private sources. Describe how the program

will meet the financial matching requirements. Discuss plans for sustaining the program beyond the grant term.

2. **Budget that supports the program design.** Discuss how: the program narrative, budget and budget narratives correspond; the budget reflects program goals and design; the match requirements are met; the costs clearly demonstrate support for the AmeriCorps program component; the costs across sites demonstrate appropriate consistency with one another as well as with national program goals.
3. **Cost-effectiveness.** Describe sources of additional financial or other types of support for the program.

Objectives

Complete the AmeriCorps Objectives Worksheets following the instructions. Your objectives should be clearly linked to the program narrative and focus on the areas in which you expect to make the greatest impact. Allow time so that you address all of the components needed in developing an objective. Once you have completed a worksheet for each objective, transfer each summary statement onto the AmeriCorps Program Objectives Summary Form. Submit only the AmeriCorps Program Objectives Summary Form to us.

Assurances and Certifications

Read the certifications and assurances carefully. When you have done so, complete the form which certifies that your organization will comply with all the required assurances and certifications.

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(FACE SHEET)

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PART I: FACE SHEET INSTRUCTIONS

This form is required for preapplications and applications submitted for federal assistance.

Item #

1. Filled in for your convenience.
2. Self-explanatory.
3. 3.a. and 3.b. are for State use only (if applicable).
4. Item 4.a: Leave blank
Item 4.b: If you are a recipient in year 2 or 3 of an already-awarded grant, enter the grant number. Otherwise, leave blank.
5. Enter the following information:
 - a. Your organization's legal name.
 - b. The name of the primary organizational unit that will undertake the assistance activity, if different.
Your organization's complete address using the full nine-digit ZIP code.
 - c. The name and contact information of the project director or other person to contact on matters related to this application.
6. Enter your Employer Identification Number (EIN) as assigned by the Internal Revenue Service.
7. Item 7.a.: Enter the appropriate letter in the box.
Item 7.b: Consult the following list of characteristics of applicants and enter (ALL that apply) of the corresponding numbers, each in a separate blank.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Governor's Office | 17. Hispanic Serving College or University |
| 2. State Commission/Alternative Administrative Entity | 18. Community College |
| 3. State Education Agency | 19. 2-year college |
| 4. Other State Government | 20. Tribally controlled college or university |
| 5. U.S. Territory | 21. School (K-12) |
| 6. Local Education Agency | 22. Area Agency on Aging |
| 7. Local Affiliate of National Organization | 23. Chamber of Commerce/Business Association |
| 8. Statewide Association | 24. Community-Based Organization |
| 9. Community Action Agency/ Community Action Program | 25. Service/Civic Organization |
| 10. Tribal Government Entity | 26. Volunteer Management Organization |
| 11. Tribal Organization (non-government) | 27. Law Enforcement Agency |
| 12. Grant-making Entity Operating in Two or More States | 28. Health Department |
| 13. Higher Education Consortium | 29. Self-Incorporated Senior Corps Project |
| 14. Vocational/Technical College | 30. Faith-based organization |
| 15. Liberal Arts College | |
| 16. Historically Black College or University (HBCU) | |

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8. Check appropriate box for type of application and enter appropriate letter(s) in the lower boxes:
 - a. “New” means you are applying for assistance for the first time, under this program, or are re-applying as a new grantee after completing your grant cycle.
 - b. “Continuation” means you are applying for second or third year funding within your 2 or 3 year project period.
 - c. “Revision” means any change in CNCS’s existing current grant award financial obligation or contingent liability. For a “Revision”, check the appropriate box “A” – “E”.
9. Filled in for your convenience.
10. Use the following list of CFDA (Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance) numbers for the applicable program listing, or other source if instructed:

94.001	Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP)
94.003	State Commissions on National and Community Service – Operating Funds
94.004	Learn and Serve America School and Community-Based
94.005	Learn and Serve America Higher Education
94.006	AmeriCorps*State and National Direct
94.007	Innovation Grants (Indicate in Block 10 the applicable program, e.g., Martin Luther King, Jr., Day, Disabilities Outreach, America’s Promise Fellows, AmeriCorps Education Award, Etc.)
94.009	Training and Technical Assistance
94.011	Foster Grandparent Program
94.013	AmeriCorps*VISTA
94.015	Senior Demonstration Program
94.016	Senior Companion Program
11. Enter the title of the project.
12. List only the largest political entities affected (e.g., the State, counties, cities).
13. (See item 8)
New application: Enter the dates for the proposed project period. It can be up to 3 years.
Continuation application or application for revision: Enter the dates of the approved project period from an original grant award or most recent amendment.
14. See below for the funding lines applicable to different programs. Check the appropriate box to indicate the grant year for which funding is being requested. If applying for a period of a year or less, check the “Yr. 1” box. Enter the amount requested or to be contributed during this budget period. The value of in-kind contributions should be included in these amounts, as applicable. For revisions (See item 8), if the action will

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result in a dollar change to an existing award, include only the amount of the change. For decreases, enclose the amounts in parentheses.

Applicable Funding Lines:

All lines: RSVP, Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program, and AmeriCorps*VISTA

Lines a, b, Total: AmeriCorps, Learn and Serve America, State Commissions, Innovation Grants, and Training and Technical Assistance, as applicable.

15. The state or states in which your project will operate may have established a review and comment procedure on federal assistance, in response to Executive Order 12372. This process, if applicable to the program for which you are applying, provides the state(s) an opportunity to review your application. To determine whether your application is subject to this review, RSVP, Foster Grandparent Program, Senior Companion Program and AmeriCorps*VISTA applicants should contact their Corporation State Office. AmeriCorps State and National Direct and Learn and Serve America applicants should contact the Corporation for National and Community Service. After confirmation of status, fill in the date or check the appropriate box.
16. Check the appropriate box. This question applies to the applicant organization, not the person who signs as the authorized representative. Categories of debt include delinquent audit allowances, loans, and taxes.
17. The person who signs this form must be the applicant's authorized representative. A copy of the governing body's authorization for this official representative to sign must be on file in the applicant's office.

Note: Falsification or concealment of a material fact, or submission of false, fictitious or fraudulent statements or representations to any department or agency of the United States Government may result in a fine of not more than \$10,000 or imprisonment for not more than five (5) years, or both. (18 U.S. Code Section 1001)

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Appendix A

DEFINITIONS

Act means the National and Community Service Act of 1990, as amended (42 U.S.C. §12501 *et seq.*).

AmeriCorps National Service Network means AmeriCorps*State, AmeriCorps*National, AmeriCorps*Tribes and Territories, Volunteers in Service to America (VISTA), and National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) Programs taken together as programs dedicated to national service. VISTA is authorized under the Domestic Volunteer Service Act (42 U.S.C. §4950 *et seq.*). NCCC is authorized under the National and Community Service Act (42 U.S.C. §12611 *et seq.*).

Approved national service position means a national service position for which the Corporation has approved the provision of a national service education award as one of the benefits provided for successful service in the position.

Eligible Member means an individual: (1) who is enrolled in an approved national service position; (2) who is a U.S. citizen, U.S. national or lawful permanent resident alien of the United States; (3) who is at least 17 years of age at the commencement of service unless the member is out of school and enrolled **(a)** in a full-time, year-round youth corps Program or full-time summer Program as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a) (2)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 25, inclusive, or **(b)** in a Program for economically disadvantaged youth as defined in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572 (a)(9)), in which case he or she must be between the ages of 16 and 24, inclusive; and (4) has a high school diploma or an equivalency certificate [or agrees to obtain a high school diploma or its equivalent before using an education award] and who has not dropped out of elementary or secondary school in order to enroll as an AmeriCorps member (unless enrolled in an institution of higher education on an ability to benefit basis and is considered eligible for funds under section 484 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, 20 U.S.C. §1091), or who has been determined through an independent assessment conducted by the Program to be incapable of obtaining a high school diploma or its equivalent (provided that the Corporation has waived the education attainment requirement for the individual).

Indian tribe means a federally-recognized Indian Tribe, band, nation, or other organized group or community, including any Native village, Regional Corporation, or Village Corporation, as defined under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (43 U.S.C. § 1602), that the United States Government determines is eligible for special programs and services provided under federal law to Indians because of their status as Indians. Indian Tribes also include any tribal organization controlled, sanctioned, or chartered by one of the entities described above.

Program means a national service Program, described in the Act (42 U.S.C. §12572(a)), carried out by the Grantee through funds awarded by the Corporation and carried out in accordance with federal requirements and the Provisions of this Grant.

Project means an activity or set of activities carried out by a Program that results in a specific, identifiable community service or improvement: (1) that otherwise would not have been made with existing funds; and (2) that does not duplicate the routine services or functions of the organization to whom the members are assigned.

Project sponsor means an organization or other entity that has been selected to provide a placement for a member.

State Commission means, for the purposes of these Grant Provisions, the Commission on National and Community Service established by a state pursuant to the Act (42 U.S.C. §12638), including an authorized alternative administrative entity to administer the state's national service plan and national service programs and to perform such other duties prescribed by law.

Appendix B

BUDGET ANALYSIS CHECK-LIST

Legal Applicant: _____

This check-list will help you to make sure that you submit an accurate budget that meets our requirements. Read the guidance carefully in the right column when reviewing your budget and place a check in the left-hand column.

Compliance?

Member Support Costs

- Yes ___ No ___ Cash match is met? All budget items under Member Support Costs (living allowance, FICA workers' compensation, health care) have, at a minimum, a 15% **cash** match. Except for health care, you cannot use other federal funds for the match. If you use work-study funds, there must be an aggregate 15% non-federal share of all member support costs.
- Yes ___ No ___ Correct living allowance? Full-time AmeriCorps members receive at least the minimum living allowance of \$9,600. Programs in existence prior to September 21, 1993 may offer a lower living allowance than the minimum. If such a program chooses to offer a living allowance, it is exempt from the minimum requirement but not from the maximum requirement. Programs are not required to pay half-time members living allowances but if you do, identify the appropriate living allowance listed in the application guidelines.
- Yes ___ No ___ Federal share of the living allowance for full-time members is no more than \$8,160? Regardless of the size of the living allowance, the Corporation share (including other federal funds) cannot be more than 85% of the minimum allowance.
- Yes ___ No ___ Federal share of the living allowance for half-time members is no more than \$4,320? As with full-time members, programs may provide a higher living allowance for your half-time members, but the Corporation's share may not exceed 85% of \$5,082.
- Yes ___ No ___ Living allowances are not paid on an hourly basis? They may be calculated using service hours and program length to derive a weekly or biweekly distribution amount. The distribution should occur in equal increments that are not based on the specified number of hours worked.
- Yes ___ No ___ Is FICA calculated correctly? All programs must pay FICA for any member receiving a living allowance. Calculate FICA at 7.65% of the total amount of the living allowance. You must prorate FICA in the same proportion as our match and your match.

Yes ___ No ___ Correct Workers' Compensation calculation? Some States require workers' compensation for their AmeriCorps members. Programs must check with your State Department of Labor or State Commission to determine if your program is required to pay workers' compensation and at what level. Programs that are not required to pay workers' compensation need to provide similar coverage for members' on-the-job-injuries through your own existing coverage or a new policy purchased in accordance with normal procedures.

Yes ___ No ___ Health care is provided for qualified full-time AmeriCorps members only (unless half-time serving for a sustained full-time period of time such as summer service)? If your program chooses to provide health care to other half-time members, you may not use our funds to help pay for any portion of the cost. Programs must provide health care coverage to all full-time members who do not have adequate health care coverage at the time of enrollment or who lose coverage due to participation in the program. In addition, programs must provide coverage if a full-time member loses coverage during the term of service through no deliberate act of his or her own. If programs already carry minimum benefits at a reasonable cost, you may use existing policies to cover members. We will not cover health care costs for family members.

Staff

Yes ___ No ___ Costs charged under the staff line item directly relate to the operation of the AmeriCorps program/project? Examples include costs for staff who recruit, train, place, or supervise members.

Yes ___ No ___ Staff indirectly involved in the management or operation of the applicant organization are funded through the administrative cost section of the budget? Examples of administrative costs include central management and support functions.

Yes ___ No ___ Staff fundraising expenses are not charged to the grant? You may not charge AmeriCorps staff members' time and related expenses for fundraising to us or to your share of the grant. Expenses incurred to raise funds may be paid out of the funds raised. Development officers and fund-raising staff are not allowable expenses.

Operational

Yes ___ No ___ Funds for the purchase of equipment (does not include general office use equipment) are limited to 10% of the total grant amount?

Yes ___ No ___ All single equipment items over \$5000 are specifically listed?

Yes ___ No ___ Justification/explanation of equipment items is included?

Note: Continuation programs should require only a minimum of equipment purchases. Therefore, we discourage equipment purchases such as computers and printers unless you demonstrate a unique situation.

Yes ___ No ___ Funds to pay relocation expenses of AmeriCorps members are not in our share of the budget?

Yes ___ No ___ Internet and e-mail requirements are met? AmeriCorps programs must have Internet and e-mail capability and subscribe to the AmeriCorps listserver run by the National Service Resource Center (at ETR Associates).

Yes ___ No ___ Guidelines concerning service gear have been followed? Even though the Corporation has made the Service Gear package optional, State Commissions should feel free to encourage programs to provide this package for their members. If a program chooses to purchase the standard service gear package, it should budget \$35.00 per member. If the program needs the shirt with a collar, it should budget between \$35.00 and \$70.00 per member. We will pay up to \$150.00 per member for additional safety apparel that is necessary to perform daily service. You must include a justification for these additional items in the budget narrative.

Yes ___ No ___ Have you included up to \$2,000.00 for travel to Corporation-sponsored meetings in the budget?

Administration

Yes ___ No ___ Our maximum share of Administrative costs does not exceed 5% of total Corporation funds? (Multiply all other Corporation funds by .0526 to determine the administrative share)

Yes ___ No ___ Administrative costs include the following: (1) indirect costs such as legal staff, central management and support functions; (2) costs for financial, accounting, auditing, internal evaluations, and contracting functions; (3) costs for insurance that protects the entity that operates the program; and (4) the portion of the salaries and benefits of the director and any other program administrative staff not attributable to the time spent in support of a specific program or project.

Other

Yes ___ No ___

All "Operational Costs" (anything other than Member Support Costs) are matched at least **33%** by your program with cash or in-kind services?

Your share of the program operating cost is 33%. Therefore, our funds may not exceed 67% of the program operating cost (whether the program is a grantee or sub-grantee) including administration. Your program may provide its share of operating costs through cash or in-kind contributions. The share of funds may come from a number of sources. However, we require that all programs raise some of the funds from the private sector, i.e. non-governmental funds. Please note that the maximum amount of the living allowance that may be paid using Corporation and other federal funds remains at 85%.

Yes ___ No ___

Have you included the number of new full-time and half-time members receiving education awards (see Box 1 on budget form)?

Yes ___ No ___

Programs meet the "Cost Per Member" guidelines? No individual program funded by the commission may propose a Corporation share that exceeds \$15,700 per member.

State Commissions are urged to reduce the per member costs of all their AmeriCorps*State programs. We have set an average cost per state of \$12,400. Individual programs within the state may propose costs per member that are higher or lower than this figure as long as the average cost meets the target.

Yes ___ No ___

All budget line items, including consultant costs, are adequately explained in the narrative?

Yes ___ No ___

Do line items add up to the specified subtotals and totals?

Appendix C

GUIDANCE ON DEVELOPING OBJECTIVES

All programs applying for AmeriCorps*State funding must complete objective worksheets. You should complete the forms following the instructions and link your objectives to the information you provide in the program narrative. Objectives are a reflection of essential program goals for the year. They should state what will change as a result of program participants' efforts throughout the year. Include only activities that are at the core of the program's mission in your application.

All AmeriCorps applicants must provide up to three objectives in each of the following areas:

- getting things done (community service objectives);
- member development; and
- community strengthening.

Objectives statements have five components that are described on the worksheets provided. Use the worksheets to develop the components (if needed), then combine them into one statement of the objective at the bottom of the page. The five components are as follows:

- the service to be done or the activities to be engaged in;
- the intended result of that service;
- a method of measuring quality or impact;
- a standard of success; and
- the number of individuals who benefit.

The objectives should focus on results. However, programs should know that a range of results exists for any set of activities. For instance, a mentoring program may lead to a decrease in drop-out rates, which leads to an increase in graduation rates, which leads to better job histories, and so on. Community and member impact objectives should be established as far along the spectrum as possible away from processes and towards ultimate outcomes, given the constraints of measurability in a single year.

Getting Things Done (Community Service Objectives)

Community service objectives should derive from the mission statement and reflect the impact your program hopes to have on the recipients of the services you provide. For example, your tutoring program hopes to improve the mathematics skills of at least 25 students through tutoring. A diagnostic test will determine the students' tutoring needs at the beginning of the program. Your program hopes students will master at least 75% of their skills that require remediation, as determined by re-testing.

1. The service you will provide is tutoring.
2. The intended result is an improvement in mathematics skills.
3. The measure of impact is a pre-test, post-test comparison.
4. The standard of success is "mastery" of 75% of the skills tutored.
5. Twenty-five students benefit from the service.

Do not specify the nature of the diagnostic test and the meaning of the word “mastery” in this section. Provide details on those elements in your application’s program narrative.

Member Development

Member development objectives should reflect the growth and development that you hope will occur in members as a result of involvement with your program. For example, your program hopes to increase the problem-solving skills of its 50 members through a variety of problem-solving exercises and reflection. A set of pre- and post- exercises will assess increases in problem-solving skills. Your program hopes to see a notable increase in skills in at least 80% of your members.

1. The activities members will engage in are problem solving exercises and reflection.
2. The intended result is increased problem-solving skills.
3. The measure of quality or impact is a set of pre- and post- problem-solving exercises.
4. The standard of success is a notable increase in skills in 80% of the members.
5. Fifty members will benefit.

Provide more details on the problem-solving exercises in your application’s program narrative.

Strengthening Community

Community-strengthening objectives should express changes you hope to effect in the larger community. For example, you hope to develop and implement a volunteer initiative to increase the numbers of community volunteers involved with the program. Track hours using weekly logs. You estimate that volunteers will donate 300 hours.

1. The activities you will engage in are the development and implementation of a volunteer program.
2. The intended result is an increase in volunteer hours.
3. You will use the program “log” that records the number of additional volunteer hours to measure the quality or impact.
4. The standard of success is 300 hours.
5. The volunteers, the program and the larger community will benefit.

Note that this objective focuses more on process than results (it covers the establishment of a volunteer program, not the impact of that program on the larger community or those the volunteers serve). We understand that community-strengthening objectives will generally focus on development and implementation activities, not the ultimate outcomes of those activities. Also, the fifth component (number of individuals who benefit) is generally less defined for community building objectives than it is for community service and member development objectives.

Appendix D

POLICY GUIDANCE ON FUNDRAISING

While there are a wide range of activities you may undertake to create a sustainable future for your program, you should keep in mind that you cannot pay for certain activities out of federal grant funds. Before making plans, you may want to review the Office of Management and Budget Circular applicable to your organization that spells out the costs that you may and may not charge to your grant. For example, under the OMB Circulars, you cannot charge to your grant the costs of “organized fundraising” or expenses incurred “solely to raise capital or obtain contributions.” Staff supported by AmeriCorps grant funds must be careful to comply with the OMB limitations while on AmeriCorps time and to not charge the time spent on these activities to the AmeriCorps grant. OMB Circulars also require that you keep accurate records regarding time you spend on these and your other activities to convey the nature of the activities clearly.

Overall, AmeriCorps members cannot assist their organizations in major fund raising efforts. However, our policy permits some limited activities related to fundraising by AmeriCorps members to the extent that such activities “provide immediate and direct support to a specific and direct service activity; fall within the program’s approved direct service objectives; are not the primary activity of the program; and do not involve significant amounts of time for any member.”

Following are some examples that may help to clarify what you can do with federal grant funds, as well as what you may not charge to your AmeriCorps grant. There are also examples of what AmeriCorps members may do, as well as activities that are prohibited for members.

You may:

- Develop and print materials such as brochures and annual reports that you will use for outreach to the general public, which includes potential board members, funders and community partners.
- Contact individuals and organizations that are potential partners who may assist your program in delivering services.
- Ask your board of directors and other volunteers to raise funds on their own time.
- Pay for a program evaluation to demonstrate the impact and effectiveness of your program.
- Solicit community involvement or in-kind support for your program - e.g., seek volunteers to help with the project and donations of building supplies for a construction project.
- Coordinate community involvement in a day of service, serv-a-thon, or other direct service activities that may have a fundraising element.
- Include members of the public (including funders and other community partners) on your general mailing list for newsletters or brochures and other general interest publications. (But publications paid for from AmeriCorps grant funds, including matching or other federal funds, should not contain solicitations of donations).
- Include in your general-purpose newsletter a “wish list” of needed in-kind items

- Invite members of the public, including funders, to make a site visit to your program.
- Ask for advice from individuals with expertise who may be business or foundation staff regarding matters such as program development, training and evaluation;
- Invite members of the public, including funders and other community partners, to attend graduation ceremonies and other special events;
- Ask a local business to sponsor a recognition event for members or volunteers.

Members may:

- Solicit supplies from local businesses for a direct service project, - e.g., solicit several cans of paint from a store near a work site to meet a need.
- Organize an occasional “serv-a-thon” in which members recruit individuals to obtain sponsors in advance of an approved direct service event.

You may not:

- Charge time to your AmeriCorps grant for staff to prepare funding proposals;
- Use AmeriCorps grant funds, including matching or other federal funds, to develop promotional materials solely targeted at prospective funders;
- Use AmeriCorps grant funds, including matching or other federal funds, to engage in a direct mail campaign to raise funds;
- Use AmeriCorps grant funds, including matching or other federal funds, to conduct capital campaigns or endowment drives;
- Hire a development consultant and charge fees to your AmeriCorps grant;
- Charge time staff spends on fundraising to sources of AmeriCorps or other federal grant funds.

Members may not:

- Prepare any part of a grant proposal, perform fundraising functions to help you achieve your match requirement or to pay your organization’s general operating expenses, or provide fundraising assistance to other community-based organizations that do not provide immediate and direct support to your program objectives.

Appendix E

POLICY GUIDANCE ON CRIMINAL RECORD CHECKS

This information explains the grant award provision related to criminal record checks and our expectations related to this provision. It reflects our guidance on this matter. The following includes:

- the provision
- statement of purpose
- discussion of our expectations for direct grantees and State Commissions
- general guidance

Provision

“AmeriCorps Programs with members or employees who have substantial direct contact with children (as defined by state law) or who perform service in the homes of children or individuals considered vulnerable by the program, shall, to the extent permitted by state and local law, conduct criminal record checks on these members or employees as part of the screening process.”

Statement of Purpose

While acknowledging that the vast majority of AmeriCorps members would not intentionally harm recipients of service, we are nevertheless very concerned about the potential for improper or criminal conduct that victimizes program clients. Such victimization does damage to the individual harmed, the program, and the entire AmeriCorps national service network.

Programs have the responsibility to establish and use thorough screening processes to determine the suitability of candidates for selection to provide the program’s services. In certain programs, because of the vulnerability of the client population, it is prudent to conduct a criminal record check for each applicant. The suitability determination that you should make includes information from the criminal record check, as well as the other information that you gain through the application and screening process. Many programs are already using criminal record checks as part of their screening, and insurance companies are requiring this step more often.

We recognize that you are in the best position to make decisions concerning the screening mechanisms you use, including criminal history checks, taking into account the nature of the service activity and the potential vulnerability of service recipients. The same is generally true of decisions about the criteria, including criminal records that would warrant rejection of a candidate.

While no practical system of applicant screening, including record checks, can guarantee avoidance of every possible problem, our purpose is to protect recipients of service, protect AmeriCorps programs from unnecessary liability exposure, and to protect the public image of the AmeriCorps national service network.

Corporation Expectations

We expect that you will regard criminal record checks as one part of the applicant screening process that may have many other steps – all related to making appropriate determinations about the suitability of applicants. In addition, conducting criminal record checks does not free you and program sponsors from the responsibility of careful program management and effective supervision of members and program staff. In carrying out the criminal record check grant provision, you should take the following steps:

1. Consider whether your program involves substantial direct contact with children or performs service in the homes of children or other vulnerable individuals. The term, children is defined by state law. Substantial direct contact means contact with children that is regular, continuous and personal in nature. Your program should determine, based on specific circumstances, whether individuals are “vulnerable” or not. Examples of vulnerable individuals may include (but are not limited to) infirm elderly persons, or individuals with a physical or mental disability.
2. If so, determine; (a) the appropriate form of criminal record check that you should make, based primarily on the responsibilities of the position; (b) the process by which you may carry out that check; and, (c) any limitations imposed by state or local law.
3. Conduct a check on AmeriCorps members and staff whose duties involve substantial direct contact with children or who perform service in the homes of children or other vulnerable individuals. If your program must conduct criminal history checks, you should do so for all new and continuing members, as well as for staff.
4. Determine in advance, the types of criminal backgrounds that should result in termination of candidacy or service.
5. Ensure that you take consistent actions on the information that you receive.
6. Ensure that you carefully observe privacy considerations and that you appropriately safeguard the confidentiality of criminal history information you possess.
7. Your program should be aware of the various criminal record indices that are available, such as local (both city and county, as applicable), state, national, military, and international indices.
8. Your program should obtain enough information on the background of applicants (for example whether the applicant has served in the military service, traveled abroad, or relocated within the United States) to determine which indices you should query.

While the above describes our minimum expectations, the circumstances of a local program and applicable state law or regulations may dictate that additional steps be taken.

Concerning the cost of record checks for members, explore whether they can be conducted free or at reduced cost (as a number of programs are already doing), or if any community partners can support this activity. If it is necessary to use our funds, your program should

attempt to rebudget within existing funds. Commissions may use carry-over formula funds for this purpose.

General guidance

Below are suggestions and approaches that may be useful in developing procedures to fulfill this responsibility.

- Your program should review these requirements with legal counsel and your liability insurance carrier.
- You should ask each applicant, as part of the application process about his or her criminal history. Failure to truthfully complete an application should automatically result in termination of candidacy, a fact that you should note in the application itself.
- You should prominently announce notice of your intent to conduct criminal record checks – both to discourage individuals with potentially unacceptable backgrounds from even applying, and to evidence your concern for the safety of your clientele.
- If your program announces that it will conduct criminal record checks, you should do so. Failure to conduct a check after announcing that you will do so creates a situation of potentially serious liability.
- You have the authority to decide the specific check you will make – i.e., whether a local, statewide, or national check is appropriate – based on the circumstances of your program, relevant law and regulations concerning access to criminal records, and the populations you serve.
- Suitability for enrollment (or hiring) is a determination you make, but the standard of care that your program should adhere to is one of “reasonable precautions”. This means that your program should take reasonable precaution to discover the existence of background information that, if not discovered, could possibly result in an injury to a third party. Your failure to satisfy this standard of care could result in being held liable for its negligent acts or omissions.
- You need not "recheck" returning members (or continuing staff) each year after the initial check, but the member contract (or employment agreement) should include a provision that your program leadership will be notified if the member is arrested for any of certain specified offenses.
- Your program should be aware of the various criminal record indices that are available, such as local (both city and county, as applicable), state, national, military, and international indices.
- Your program should obtain enough information on the background of applicants (for example, whether the applicant has served in the military service, traveled abroad, or relocated within the United States) to determine which indices you should query.
- While criminal records checks normally involve state agencies, you should contact your local police or sheriffs’ departments for assistance in identifying potential vulnerable populations, as well as with determining the appropriate form of background check, based on local circumstances, and carry out that check. Generally, law enforcement agencies prefer to help at the outset – to help avoid

- problems later. If a specific state does not allow access to statewide criminal records, you should conduct local checks to the maximum extent allowed.
- If arrest information is not accompanied by disposition information, it may not provide sufficient basis for rejection of applications.
 - You should develop, and carefully adhere to, written policies related to safeguarding confidential information (criminal records) received and used by your program.
 - After considering re-budgeting within the grant and exploring other avenues of support, if you are still having difficulty paying the cost of these checks you should contact us.

Further Information

For further information or assistance with implementing these requirements, contact your program officer at the Corporation for National and Community Service.